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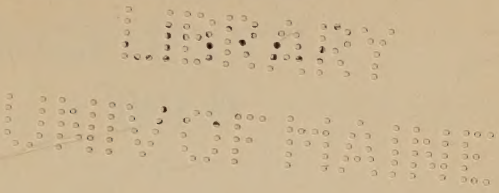

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RELUCTANTLY TOLD

BY

JANE HILLYER

INTRODUCTION BY

JOSEPH COLLINS, M.D.

LONDON

WISHART AND COMPANY

MCMXXVII

Hillside School

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DEDICATION

If they will accept it, I offer this record to
"The Doctor Who Looks at Literature"
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and to "The Woodsman"

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INTRODUCTION

JANE HILLYER has given us an extraordinary document. She has told us in simple language how one " feels " as the mind disintegrates. She has given a remarkably vivid description of the distortion that the mind suffers when it goes out of gear. She has set forth in the lines and between the lines the struggle between instinct and ethics, urges and conventions when the blossom of the mind begins to fade as no one else ever has, save Gérard de Nerval. His *Le Rêve et la Vie* contains the best description of how it " feels " to go crazy that I have ever encountered.

Gérard de Nerval, for whom poetry was the breath, the essence of nature, was a true psychopath. He wrote one book that will live, *Daughters of Fire.* During his short life he displayed several attacks of what is popularly known as mania. It was clearly recognized that the variety of insanity from which he suffered was the manic-depressive. In that variety, attacks usually end in recovery and the individual as a rule has a keen recollection of

everything that has transpired during the attack.

That such is the case is attested by Beer's book entitled *The Mind That Found Itself.* That book which has been an enlightening agency for the American public was written largely, I believe, after the author had regained intellectual and emotional equilibrium. De Nerval, on the other hand, wrote his description during the attack and therefore we see the distortion grow just as we see a fire starting from a tiny flame gradually increase until it envelops the house or the haystack.

Jane Hillyer's illness was diagnosed as dementia praecox; that makes her remarkable book all the more interesting because every one will admit that in her presentation, interpretation and conclusion there is not the smallest indication of dementia. Oftentimes, however, the disease does not progress as far as dementia and it does not always appear during or soon after puberty. Hence, many psychiatrists object to the name of dementia praecox, but now that we see it continually in the newspapers it is likely that the name has come to

ay. Were I not obliged to say that, in my pinion, the psychosis of Miss Hillyer was not ementia praecox, I should be under the neces- ty of discussing that disease at some length, ut I am convinced that her disorder was anic-depressive insanity displaying itself as ne of the mixed forms.

The manifestations of this variety of insanity re exaggerations, profound and grotesque, of ne normal. Very few of us go through life, or ven through one day, on an even emotional eel. (Here it must be said that the word emotional" is used as synonymous with the ffective side of mental life.) No one of artistic emperament ever does, and the closer the ndividual of artistic temperament approxi- nates genius, the surer he is to display waves f exaltation and depression which can scarcely e distinguished from manic-depressive in- nity.

Miss Hillyer has not only made an interesting ontribution to the development of one variety f insanity, but she has shown how psychopathy aries in display, in parent and child. Her ther, a man of artistic temperament, was a

genuine psychopath, just as genuine as she is but the manifestations of the psychopathy were entirely different, never so bunched and flagrant in his case as in hers. Hence, no one suspected that he was a " mental " case ; but he was just as much a " mental " case as his daughter.

It will occur to the reader to ask himself " Is this a Proustian gesture on the part of Miss Hillyer ? Is this an effort to revivify and recall *le temps perdu* ? Does the author really recall her intellectual and emotional products with the vividness and accuracy that she pretends ? " In other words, is this document a recollection or a fabrication ? So far as I am able to judge from many interviews with the writer, the substance of the book is a distinct recollection as vivid and concrete, and with as appropriate emotional concomitant as the parents' recollection of the birth of their first child, or a loved wife's recollection of her husband's proposal of marriage.

Teachers, employers and social workers in particular should find it a most instructive book. They all come in contact with young men and women in the early stages of mental

diseases and they are at a loss to know what advice to give, how they can best help safeguard the welfare of the potential lunatic. They will be in a better position to accomplish this after reading this book than before. Physicians will find it most illuminating, for it will convey to them a deeper significance of 'insight," "associations," "orientation" and 'affectivity," and it will answer some perplexing questions of psychopathology. And the personnel of institutions for the insane will find in it information and encouragement, possibly even a tiny bit of reproach.

Not only is Miss Hillyer's book a contribution to the understanding and plumbing of mental disorders; it is a contribution to literature.

Alexandre Dumas said that the subject of a novel or of a story influences its form. It may, although we have writers who write of dull subjects entertainingly and of uninteresting people interestingly. But even had Dumas been right in his assertion, he has not told the whole truth. *Reluctantly Told* suggests and establishes that the nature of an author influences the book more than the subject does.

Here we have a book on insanity in which we are spared none of its torturing ghastliness, none of the bitter and actual experiences of treatment; but because the author is something of a poet and very much of a human being, we never taste the dregs of the theme. It planes and soars above our everyday life even when we are in the depths of the deep abyss in which Miss Hillyer found herself so often during the years of mental disequilibrium. She envelops her thoughts with great delicacy and they make pictures as fine as frost patterns upon window-panes. She is what may be called a born writer. It comes easy to her—or so it seems—to find the right word, the proper expression; she plays hide-and-seek with words and still more with ideas. She dismisses them with a fine gesture when they become embarrassing, but she plays fair. She does not dismiss them before she has given them their chance to reach the reader's mind and leave their impression on him. She does not overemphasize anything or stress a point to its limits. That is the reader's task. The result is that we have the impression of watching a

game of battledore and shuttlecock played by the Three Graces.

Miss Hillyer has something of Walter de la Mare in her style. Like his Midget, she is continually on tiptoes to respond to the world; at times, she rises to great heights of heroism in her fight against the "thing" as she calls her insanity, and when she does, she seems unconscious of it.

When she refers to childish memories the visible pattern of her adult thoughts is entirely annihilated; it is all intangible and sacred. One feels it would be sinful to touch them or point to them, and she seems to have done one of the most difficult things for narrators to do: refrain from embellishing her experiences. Early memories seldom come out clean, as do hers, untouched by mature experience.

Every stage of the disease is clearly defined, profoundly felt and truthfully presented. And there permeates throughout her narrative a delightful sense of humour, an ardent desire to see the less distressing parts of the tragedy. These have much to do with relieving it of its obvious horror.

In the concluding chapter she reveals sense and sensibility, humour and philosophy, and sanity is stamped on every sentence.

Physicians do not know much about insanity, but what they know is colossal compared to what laymen know. Not only have the latter no information of it, they have a vast amount of misinformation. They have no idea that there are many varieties of insanity which are as different from one another in origin, display, course and termination, as typhoid, rheumatism and cancer. They have no capacity to believe that an individual may be insane one moment, one hour, one day and not the next moment, the next hour, the next day. The majority of people visualize an insane person as a "raving lunatic." But the most profound lunatic of all is the one who does not rave: the paranoiac who plans and plots often with great discernment and always with tremendous energy, who surmounts obstacles and overcomes difficulties that baffle, impede and discourage the average sane person, and who has self-confidence and self-belief that transcend understanding.

It is difficult to convince the layman that an insane person does not display the symptoms of his psychosis simultaneously. In reality he never has all the symptoms at one time. In this respect insanity is like nearly all other diseases. Many believe that our hospitals harbour patients who are sane; others believe that they discharge patients who are still insane. Some believe that insanity is incurable; others do not distinguish between paranoia and paresis. Many who talk about their physical ills as if they were jewels or decorations have a sinking sensation when their mental ills are suspected or discussed.

Not a few believe that insanity is frequently simulated and that criminals seek to protect themselves from punishment by claim on the part of counsel that they are insane. Insanity is sometimes simulated but always by psychopaths most of whom become insane eventually.

Hercules might have been able to simulate insanity successfully but few present-day men are, even though they be wizards. In reality, the dissimulators of insanity are far more

dangerous to themselves and to others than the simulators.

The message that the psychiatrist has most difficulty in delivering to the layman is that the insane person is a sick person; that he deserves treatment as richly as the person who has pneumonia; and that proper treatment has the same relationship to the outcome of this disease as it has to all diseases. It is regrettable that the first step in the proper treatment is to deprive the patient of his liberty and that to accomplish it we have to evoke the law; but it is just as regrettable that we have to withstand the clamours for food of our patients in the terminal stages of typhoid fever, and that we must fetter our tuberculosis patients in the early stages of their infection that the energy needed to baffle the bacilli may be conserved.

"Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself from my enemies" was, I am sure, first uttered by a person who had recovered from an attack of insanity.

Parents and relatives are the friends the lunatic should fear. In the first place if the

patient does not have symptoms so conspicuous and convincing that a child would realize that he was insane ; they refuse to believe it, or to take the proper steps to safeguard the patient and facilitate his recovery. In the second place they cannot be convinced that when an individual is deprived of his liberty he is not branded for ever and that when he recovers people will not eye him surreptitiously and openly to see if he talks to himself or to an imaginary person, makes faces, or wears a billycock hat when everyone else, including the Prince of Wales, is wearing a fedora.

It may be a sin, as Butler believed, to have any disease ; but the roadway leading to many sins is so yielding underfoot and so banked with alluring flowers that most of us find it difficult to take the stony one flanked with thorns. So long as religion, convention and society insist that we treat our instincts, and particularly the genesic instinct, not only as the chief source of sin, but as something to be ashamed of instead of looking upon it as a fountain of love, light and life and our noblest and most godlike possession, we are going to

have nervous and mental diseases, for most of them flow from repressing, or improperly and indiscreetly indulging that instinct.

There is a never-ending discussion about what insanity is. No one, it is said, has ever given a satisfactory definition of it; and the most soporific of all bromides is "We are all more or less insane." The truth is we are all more or less sane and we would probably be more so if we could transfer some of the energy we devote to material pursuits to ideal ones.

It is no more difficult to define insanity than it is to define disease. If one is physically inert, spiritually depressed and emotionally insensitive, has he a disease? If he has, what disease is it? Are those disagreeable symptoms not merely the result of a sleepless night, or perusal of Dr. Frank Crane's *Essays*?

It seems to suit the world to say an individual who displays social incapacity is insane; a man is insane whose conduct is prejudicial to his own welfare and injurious to the safety of others.

There is many an insane person whose

conduct neither jeopardizes his own welfare nor imperils others' safety. Epoch-makers are, as a rule, psychopaths and genius is invariably associated with psychic abnormality.

The public needs enlightenment about the psychic functions, for from such enlightenment understanding of mental aberration will flow.

It is too much to expect that it should have a comprehensive knowledge of psychology of the science of behaviour, but it is not too much to expect that it should know the principles that psychologists have established. We insist that persons asking for citizenship in this Republic should know the fundamental principles of our government. We say the most interesting study of mankind is man and then we proceed not to study him. We pass an emotional judgment upon human behaviour just as we do on pictures. We do not seek to understand that the life of man is a series of strivings toward definite goals and that in these strivings is the nature of man. He cannot stop them any more than he can stop breathing. They do not operate that the possessor may

have pleasure and avoid pain though the possessor is keen to accomplish both and deliberately spends all his time doing it. Pleasure and pain, now and hereafter, do not condition human nature and behaviour ; something antecedent to them does. We call that something the source of psychic energy and psychologists give it a particular name, but the name does not matter. What matters is that that energy, like every other form of energy, is governed by certain principles called laws. It is a part of our duty to familiarize ourselves with these laws as fast as they are formulated. The great difficulty of doing this is, there is so much discord among academic psychologists.

The layman is puzzled and does not know what to believe and what to reject. There is less discord now than ever before, and slowly psychological evidence is being evaluated and psychological principles are being codified.

We may learn more about the contents and construction and functioning of a house from examining one whose shutters are removed, windows broken and doors open than from one

whose windows are closed, shades down and doors locked. We can learn more about the mind when it is disintegrating than when it is integrating. That is one reason why the public should find an interest in this book.

JOSEPH COLLINS.

U.S.A.

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CHAPTER ONE

A LOCKED DOOR

1

I WALKED down the hall; I was going out. At the head of the stairs a door covered with heavy wire netting confronted me. The lock was fastened on the outside. I put my hand, unusually slim just then, through the netting—the wire cut my wrist—slipped the catch and went downstairs. No one was in the reception room. I sat on the porch. The lawn in front of the house was closely clipped. A bed of petunias flaunted themselves cheaply in the sun, like peasants aping princes. I hated petunias. The place was comfortable enough on the whole, but stiff and rather ugly. Yet, there was a certain restfulness about it, a quiet that was almost country. It would not be so bad to stay for a while. I leaned back in the unyielding rocker, and began to rest a little. A moment of peace descended upon me. It was to be brief. I soon heard whispers:

"She's out."

"But how? I know I locked the door. I always do."

"This is very serious. What if she got away?"

Who were they talking about, I wondered? Perhaps it was one of the patients in the back of the house. They seemed very queer. The Head Nurse came and sat down beside me. She had a lovely, tired face.

"How did you get out?"

"How did I get out? . . . Why, I walked out. Doesn't one usually?"

"Didn't you find the door at the top of the stairs locked?"

"Yes, it was locked by some mistake, I suppose."

"Then, how did you get out?"

I explained.

"You are thin, or you couldn't have opened the door," she smiled, pityingly. "You will have to eat a lot and grow fat and strong."

"I am always a little thin," I answered.

"Won't you come in with me now?" she suggested tactfully. "I have a book upstairs I want to show you."

We went in together and back to my room. I was alone for a little while, and tiring of my book, went again into the hall. Some one had been working at the door. A sickening suspicion crossed my mind. I tried the door—I could not open it. A strong piece of fine wire was securely fastened near the lock. I could not reach the catch. I was locked in!

I was locked in. It was I that the nurses had been discussing. Filled anew with a restless, gnawing misery that had brought me to the place a few days before, my moment of respite gone, I bunched myself into a knot upon the bed, burning with renewed struggle. I was locked in! All my fears were certainties; there was no escape from them; I had given up; I had done it to myself. Doubt was no longer possible. For many hours I had forgotten where I was, and why. Exhaustion had been mercifully complete. Now I began to remember, hazily. The locked door recalled it all. I was soon the victim of a stinging swarm of inconsequent recollections which I could neither drive from me, nor ignore. They came as they would, and went when they chose, directing their own course as if I had not been there at all, save as a medium for them to play upon.

I was swept back to my early childhood in a stream of confused, crowding thoughts. With fatal directness the current paused and swirled about a bronzed October day some ten years before. It had been a tragic autumn. My father had left home. He had gone, they said, in the hope that such a move would brace him; more truly he had gone because life was becoming intolerable for the two children in the house. An older brother hovered on the edge of a breakdown as the result of a prolonged

attack of rheumatic fever but recently past and I was quivering from head to foot most of the time with tension and anxiety. The outward mechanical part of life went on as usual. Every morning at nine fifteen I started for school with a book open before me, saying last minute Latin declensions to myself as I walked down the shaded street. Having been away from home all summer, I had not seen my father for many weeks. He had been pleading for only so much as a glimpse of me, but my brother was hot in his opinion. I must not—it would be too difficult. I was more than willing, but the interview had been postponed.

I looked up from my book—one day—as I came to the end of the block. My father was coming toward me down a side street which I was about to cross. Did I imagine it ? I do not know. I never shall. But I thought his face was flushed, that his gait was not so sure as usual, that he looked at me with hesitation in glazed eyes. I stood, turned to stone. All my faculties left me. It would have been so simple to go to him and say " good morning." Had the meeting proved hard he would have been the last to prolong it. Yet, I did not go. I was overcome with a sudden, inexplicable animal fear. I had never known anything like it before nor have I known anything like it since. All the bits of terror I had ever felt, all the anguish of suspense, amalgamated and

fell upon me like a mantle of lead. I was bound in every muscle. I could not move. He came nearer. Even then I did not move. He smiled—if the essence of tragic realization can be called a smile—and waved his hand indicating that I was to pass. I did so *without* speaking to him—such was my terrified confusion. I fairly raced down the street and arrived at school panting and out of breath.

When I got home I told my mother. She understood, and her sympathy was divided between us, though he must have had the major share. She suggested that I write a note to him. I have never quite stopped writing that note, and it is not yet begun. What could I say? How could I explain? I had put myself in an utterly untenable position by my absurd fright. And I knew it.

A week later I came in from school, dropped my books, threw my hat into the "old brown chair" and fell wearily onto the window-seat to watch a humming bird, with enamelled throat and vibrant wings, mine deep in a red lily searching out the last sweet meagreness of summer honey. I became conscious of my mother's voice at the telephone. As a rule she let nothing interfere with her music lessons. Something in her tone made me sit up straight. She was calm, as usual, but there was a deadly distinctness to her words that held my attention as in a vice. She went to the next room,

dismissed her pupils very quietly, then told me that my father had been found dead in his hotel that morning, a glass beside him. They thought suicide.

My brother came in just then. I left them and went to my room, shutting the door softly behind me. The storm broke. I had done this thing. I felt the responsibility for this death, and I was only thirteen. My father had sent word by a friend that the most cruel moment of his life had been that in which his own child passed him without speaking. He commissioned another friend to tell me that I had sensed his desires correctly, that he had not wanted to see me, just then. I had not known which report to accept. But at that moment there was no doubt as to what I believed. I had added the last drop to his bitter potion. I could not have felt more guilty had I administered the draught myself. So raced my thoughts. I cringed and tried to get away from them. They thronged my brain, a pursuing army of torture. Tears brought slight relief after a time, and yet, those who say that tears are always healing do not know. I was left racked and torn and, I think, never again so strong-nerved for adversity.

I grew quiet; yes, I had done this thing; there was not the slightest doubt of it. But, though he was dead, I was still alive. We should see, we should see whether mistakes of

this kind were to be the determining factors of the days that were to follow, or whether I could in some way make partial amends. I formed a compact with myself then and there. No slipping, no weakening was to be allowed. I went downstairs, calm and self-possessed. The family maid had left a day or so before, most inopportunely. My brother and I started luncheon together. All these years afterward —locked in, lying hunched upon a strange bed —I remembered how small details had been indelibly fixed by shock, how yellow the sunlight was on the butter balls I rolled between two wooden paddles. Strange that they had looked so like yesterday's butter balls.

For years I lived with that moment of stultifying fear rising up before me whenever I made a mistake. Even so slight a one as forgetting a door key or breaking a glass would recall it. Being a heedless "steeplejack" of a child, I did these things with undue frequency. Each time, I would think to myself: "There you go—slipping." I had infringed upon that solemn and absurd inner compact.

Now here I was locked in! The compact was utterly broken. I had made a second error hardly less serious than the first. This, then, was to be the determining factor; the inner structure was faulty; I *had* failed—just as he, my father, had failed before me. Mine was not so clean-cut and releasing as his had been,

though I had tried desperately to make it so. I had *failed*! How that thought battered me. All those years of effort had been in vain. A constant repetition of this idea reduced me to an abject creature tearing with its teeth at a pillow case and calling for veronal in loud, strident tones. I had had only three nights' experience with veronal but I knew what it could do. I had felt the blessing of its oblivion.

2

The sun was just beginning to sink behind the trees, just beginning to send its slow-creeping farewell shadows over the feathery grasses and across my stiff, white bed. It would be hours before it was time for sleep—for veronal. I continued my imperious demands. "Maybe they will break their old rules; maybe I can have it earlier if I make a fuss"; they did, a little. Yet long before the nurse stood before me with a glass of clear water and that magic white tablet—it always seemed the one cool, white thing in the world—long before then, I had heard my own voice, cracked and strange, mingling with the unearthly cries of other patients whose plaints came muffled, but with ghoul-like insistence from "padded rooms." "Yes, I had done it." I was mad—so mad that they had put me in a sanatorium. He had been in them, too—for another reason.

Now I followed. I had disgraced him by my insistence upon his weakness, by my projection of it. I was mad—mad! At this, I proved myself so, though I longed not to, by a high shriek rising over all other sounds in an uncontrolled crescendo.

"She is much worse to-night," said the quiet voice of the Head Nurse, "nearer violence than I thought she would ever be." Some one held my hand to quiet me. I recoiled angrily. I had a sudden hate for everything. It burned through me, an eating fire. I struggled harder. The nurse gave a quiet order. Some one in white stood before me, the glass of clear water in her hand and the tablet. I was stilled instantly. I sat up quietly and took the marvellous thing, letting the water rest as long as I could on my parched tongue.

"Strange," said the nurse in a still lower voice, "that her temperature won't go down. It has been just the same for five days."

For a little while I held myself still, held until every muscle seemed to turn to steel in its rigidity. At last came a sense of quieting, melting. I started a sentence to myself and could not finish it; drowsiness interfered. At last, if only it would come quickly! My eyes were closing; I could feel my stiff fingers loosen their grasp upon themselves. I turned over, and my head fell limply against the pillow. Sounds came through a velvet screen.

I heard the rhythm of speech, but could not comprehend the words. There was now no doubt. . . . I was going . . . to sleep. I said it again and again. Where was I going? I could not remember, but all was dark, even myself.

The next morning I was exhausted enough to be fairly quiet for a while. Then the torture began in a new and more vivid form. I had left my job. Would I ever get it again? If I didn't, what then? You can't usually get educated and accumulate large savings by the time you are twenty-four, if you are "on your own." I could not bear the thought of dependence. There were two little children in one family, one in another. Would they grow up to hate me because I deprived them of things they wanted and had a right to have?

Then I had left my teaching so suddenly. How would the faculty explain it? What sort of a record was that, to get fairly started and funk completely? Of course, I'd never get another job. Other people were doing my work, and E. . . . was on the verge of a break herself, and probably D. . ., my assistant, would have to cut short her longed-for trip West. There was no end to the wheel of punishment—it turned and turned.

How were those children? Did they feel at all the storm that broke over their peaceful, charming home? How bewitching little Jane

had looked in her corn-coloured dress, her red gold curls falling over her ears, and burning about her finely cut temples ; her eyes so far apart and wide awake. She was absurdly grown up with her competent sympathy—" sympathy for what," I railed to myself. " A nice object I was, fumbling and clumsy, unable to do the simplest thing." Jane at seven was infinitely more capable than I had been. To make a bed—an endless task. The sheets were so big, they flapped like sails in an adverse wind ; they slipped and grew bunchy under my hands. What funny piles they lay in. They did not look like sheets. What did they look like . . . nothing I had ever seen before, heaps of unearthly stuff, shapes from a nightmare. If they would stay still it would be better, but they moved. Each form was more disturbing than the last. Some one, I remembered, quietly took the sheets from my hands. How swiftly the bed had been made, and little Jane helped. She did not seem to notice those awe-inspiring coils of linen. No one noticed but me. How alone I had felt. A great distance between me and " the others " gradually widened. It was not a quiet distance, but a sharp, jagged one. Sometimes I seemed nearer, sometimes further away. It was all very restless and wearying, a sea-sickness of the mind.

Little Tip, too, in his white sailor suit, serious

and busy, what did he think? For hours he worked at his toy engine.

"Will you hold it for me while I screw a screw very tight?" That was a round engine, but to my battered sight it had queer battered edges—still it felt smooth. I pondered this anomaly and dropped the engine. Tip did not say anything, but looked at me with a strange question in his baby gaze. He was too knowing to make a fuss. Would I ever forget the expression in those long-lashed, hazel eyes? I never have.

It came over me, there in the little house: "You can stand just so much of this kind of thing." A bottle of ammonia, a triple dose of sleeping powders without avail, and then the right thing. The heavenly buzzing in my ears, the swift, sure blackness. Maybe I might find some one I wanted to see; anyway I would get away from this. I could hardly have come nearer; it was a matter almost of seconds. That awakening, mad babbling for a while, followed by a sickening quiet. I had had to come back. I was trapped into living again. There was no use in trying any more. Death and life seemed equally impossible to achieve in any vital way. All the force that had hurled me beyond earth into space was gone; all the drive of youth toward new experience. ("Strange, though," I said to myself, "that I could have got so out of scale, so unhung as

to do a trite, stupid thing like that. I may be wearing a red dress and a lavender hat next ! ")

Immediately after I regained full recollection they had brought me here ; I was very tired ; I almost forgot why I had come. I lay still. Even when I got up I was lulled for a day or so. That locked door brought it all back—even those long early months of weariness. I remembered I could always tell how tired I was by my hands. If it was an effort for me to open them, I was only " pretty tired." If I could hardly lift them from my desk, and found it difficult to pick up a pen, I considered myself really tired and had better " go easy." Getting my hair fixed in the morning was an interminable job, my arms ached so ; I hurt all over. I planned to take my vacation promptly. It was then, early May. The second week of June I would be in Nova Scotia. The intervening days were very long ; the weeks refused to end. Time was a burden that never lifted. When the first of June came, I was taken to see a doctor. He said " temperature," and " very much run down " ; " bed, and milk diet." I was in bed three awful days. It was the first time I had let myself stop. Something shadowed me. It made me crawl and curl up like a singed bug. I hid my face in my pillow to get it away from me. It would not let go. I could not sleep, but lay wide-eyed through hot summer nights. The *thing* was beside me,

over me, around me. It was making strange inroads.

"No, I must not give in." I dressed and sat on the porch. I tried to read; it was a simple pastoral tale. The *thing* would not let me. It made me feel so ill, I could remember nothing. I tried the same paragraph ten times, slowly, carefully, then faster, faster, *faster*, to escape the tormentor. I could not. I was unable even to read. At dinner that night I was very deliberate. I must watch every move or the *thing* would trip me up. No one else must know. I talked about plans for work. Every one said how much better I was; I would do fine work in the fall. The *thing* licked its lips.

That night I slept little. At midnight I awoke. The pursuer was still upon me. What *was* it? I lay and watched. Earlier in the evening I found I could not read; now I could not think. I started a train of ideas which finished itself or got lost in a tangle of cross associations. I simply had to lie there and let it; I could not direct its course at all. I tried again and again, patiently and slowly. A terror gripped me. I sat up as if pulled into position by cold, invisible ropes. My breath came in gasps. I jumped to my feet. By a faint light that came from the hall I saw a tall figure reflected in the mirror. It wore a dark blue negligee, dark hair hung down around a

white face, dark eyes looked from under knitted brows. I knew definitely that the figure in the mirror was mad. *I* was mad.

I have never learned words with which to describe the sensations accompanying that realization. I seemed dual; struggling against the truth, crying out against fate, pleading, praying; and at the same time, cool and almost surgical in my analysis of the situation. I probed to find the cause; I reckoned the factor of fatigue, long continued fever, strain, tension; I checked my recent behaviour and the accompanying drives and emotions. Yes, that explained it all. I was mad. Again I looked at the mirrored figure. It seemed all eyes. I called it by name. "Do you know," I said, "do you know that you are insane? Do you know what that means? Do you know they won't trust you any more? They can't. You may not work in the fall. You will disappoint them all. Do you know what it is like to be mad? That *thing* will get stronger and stronger. Some day it will *be* you." The figure in the mirror covered its face. The analytical part went on:

"Do you know he worked for you, and she did, and this is what you have done. If you had listened and rested and stayed out of doors and done the thousand things they advised, you might not be insane now?" The figure shrank into itself. "Everyone will know soon.

They will shut you up." The mirrored lips stifled a cry. "Do you know it's *you* that's mad, you, and not anyone you are reading about? *Do* you understand? That is what the *thing* was. It will never leave you." The figure looked long into the mirror. "Yes, I know; I know," it replied meekly, "I know it's 'me' that's mad. I won't forget." The questioner seemed satisfied and went away. Nothing so cool, so piercingly clear came near the crumpled blue heap on the bed for many years. But the *thing* came closer and closer.

"It's here *now*!" I cried out.

"Do you want a drink?" asked the Head Nurse.

3

Less and less I was lulled by weariness. More and more active became the nagging memories. Sometimes I slipped back very far, sometimes it was only the last month that rose before me. A certain night, from which I particularly recoiled, frequently assailed me. That evening, worn out with working days and trying to care for my mother who was hopelessly ill, I had yielded to the advice of a friend and gone to her home, leaving the nurse in charge. All my friend's household were planning to celebrate the youngest daughter's birthday by a motion picture party. I felt like anything but that. Still what did it matter where one was? And

the child's pleasure must not be spoiled. We left the telephone number of the theatre with her governess, and were seated before the screen watching the " effulgent glory " of Mary Pickford's curls and smiles. It was like being fed on frosting when one is starved. An usher spoke a word to my friend ; we left in haste. It was a bitter night, but as quickly as we might, with a frosted windshield, we crunched through the snow. My mother was dead. And I had been at a " movie."

It was very sudden. Death had been before us for months, but as something grey with futurity, still to be pushed out of sight by the present. Now the earth seemed broken beneath my feet, nor would it mend. One must not stumble ; one must go on. No one must guess how sharp the way was. Rocks seemed to rise out of nothing and strike one in the breast. Still one must not stop—not stop. Somehow that effort got mixed with the strangeness that was creeping near me, the shadow of a something that was going to happen to me, something I held back with all my strength while I tried to go on. Either of these two efforts would have been enough.

Well, I had stopped ; I was shut in ; I had given up. She never did—and infinitely worse things had come to her than to me. What would she think ? Her life had been a battle, unceasing, and without quarter. She fought

for my father to save him from a weakness rooted deep in his greatest strength, his versatility and sensitiveness. Where other men are like photographic plates, reproducing, in their lives, swift and fleeting impressions, he was like fine metal. Every faint shadow etched itself with acid sharpness upon his consciousness. His whole nature was furrowed and racked to its depth by the acuteness of his response to existence. Had he been sturdy in body, sound in nerve fibre, all would have been well; but he was delicately built, and there was some fatal, inborn, somatic imbalance in the nervous system. He did not have the resistance to endure the acuteness of his reactions to stimuli of all kinds; he was torn to bits by the "kick" of his engine.

Yet, in spite of the difficulties of his own being, all might still have been well had he been willing to give up his ideal of work. Throughout the greater part of the Northwest, thirty years ago, music did not exist in any big or creative sense. He felt, none the less, that the time had come. He organized and directed a small symphony orchestra. He played, he wrote, he lectured—always music for the Northwest. At last, an opportunity came, one of the finest musical Boston had to offer. He refused it, though it would have meant freedom and complete stability for his family, and a chance for unhampered musical

self-expression. He refused it because he was determined to see the fight through there in the Northwest. My mother stood with him, though I am sure she saw the odds more clearly than he ever could.

He underestimated both his own fighting powers and the forces at work in that wheat-raising, cattle-breeding community, which was only a restless atom, in the great industrial drive that had to harrow its way across this country and establish wealth and security and millionaire patronage before there could be art and music for the Northwest. He saw that drive only as a menace, in no sense as a great preparation. In a measure he was right; machines do run away with themselves and men. He was certainly right in thinking that young minds must be kept awake to the finer European traditions or else, as he cried over and over again, "My God, what will they spend their money for when they get it—tin cornices with gold-leaf veneer, silver-plated iron dogs in their front yards, and a music box that can play three tunes."

His family suffered; he agonized. The community, on the whole, was amused by his antics. As the years went by it became daily more clear that the fight had been lost for him before it began. The orchestra did not survive. The "angel" took to backing high, gaunt, new automobiles. My father went to teaching.

His clothes grew more and more shiny, his step more faltering, his violin hand thinner and less steady. He broke inch by inch, his personality disintegrating before one's eyes, growing loathsome in his own sight, but never to ours. He and my mother fought side by side, year in and year out. Little was said. The household went on with outward calm and order. We laughed a great deal; my father had real wit. Yet, underneath the surface one could always feel hot wires; the air hummed with tension, always controlled, and perhaps the more penetrating because it was so hidden.

There were long evenings of waiting, years of hope, months of sorrowing and disappointment—despair, never. They could not give up; it wasn't in them. They were born to the sound of the trumpet, for the battle, no matter the cost. This was particularly true of my mother. She took care of her children, managed her home, helped financially—finally assumed the whole of that burden—and fought on for him. That was her life. That and that only. The test of her own personality lay, for her, with his success or failure. It was he who made the end; she never would have, in any way.

Everything that anyone knew had been tried before the end came—doctors, rest, more congenial work, travel. It was of no avail. He could not get hold, nor would he give way.

Failure should not quite grip him. He would not drag the good life that was his into the gutter of dullness and heavy insensibility which must inevitably result when existence goes on without motive, purpose, or hope. He made the end, created it, with his own hand. Before the spark was gone, before indifference had even touched him, he cut the string. Life left him with all its power to charm and pain, undimmed. He died, alive.

"Disgrace," they said. Yes, if you will. "No sense of responsibility." No, save for that which cannot be touched by death. The last thing he ever wrote was an article on freedom; his violin was still in his hand when they found him. Work and the ability to soar were still his. "Failure." Oh, undoubtedly, the failure of an unknown Greek who wrote,

> "A shipwrecked sailor buried on this coast
> Bids you set sail.
> Full many a gallant ship,
> When we were lost,
> Weathered the gale."

A shipwrecked sailor, but he left to his children the heritage of struggle, a sense of the necessity of bearing his weakness like a banner of triumph in their hands.

My mother saw the end, to which she had tuned her whole being, covered by six feet of dried earth. But what was that? The power to put forth effort was still hers, and the

necessity, almost a crushing one. Out of cramped, narrow, patched, sordid pieces of life, she made, in a very few years, what was wide and filled with colour. In surroundings of real beauty she found many people who needed what she had to give. She made the harbour—in his name. That is what we, his children, were to do. Only no one said anything; we intuitively realized it.

But I hadn't made port. I had stopped—given up. What would she think? When I was very little and very bad, sometimes to punish me, she had turned her face from me for as much as fifteen minutes. I used to beg and plead, to cry and stamp. She would not look. "Maybe she never will," I thought. I called out in terror and promised never to hide all the forks under the sofa-pillows again—"no, never." Then she would turn her head and I could look again at her tragic, brown eyes "lined with gold," and at her temperately carved lips, curved in faint amusement at a frantic four year old.

"If she could see me now," I thought as I sprawled there in bed, "if she could see me now, she would turn away her face. I might call until I was dumb. She would not look. What had she to do with fools and cowards? I did not need to turn to her for help. Why should I? The gulf was too great. I had made it, not she. She was no longer of my

world. Months before I had lost the sound of her voice, the sight of her red brown hair, defined and patterned delicately by some few white locks. I had lost her quiet humour, and her moments of revealing silence—all this, months ago. But now I had lost *her*. She would not come again even to my thoughts. She could not. There was no place for her in the mind of a craven. She had turned away her face."

4

I was alone. There was just I—and "me," this beaten dog. If I was a beaten dog, that was all there was to it. I might as well know it, and know, too, that I had fallen out of my world, fallen, fallen so far that I could never return. It was as though I were "at the bottom," at the "south pole" of a gigantic sphere. It curved up and out. I had no strength to move; I could only cling like a crippled fly. I could never achieve that curve! Figures of speech were gradually becoming mental pictures; these pictures gradually dominating me more and more and becoming what I learned to know as "delusions." Yes, I had fallen out of my world. I was bound for a place inhabited by no other living thing and, strangely, I knew it. What physicians call "mental inaccessibility" was closing in. I hastened it, I think, by my realization. I

would not try to make connections or to retain those already made. I deliberately cut my moorings, more and more. Though I heard when people spoke, why answer? They were not for me nor I for them. This was, of course, intermittent, but steadily increasing.

More and more I began to object to the intrusion of those about me, to "resist," I think the term is. I did not want to go for a walk with my kind, capable little nurse. I did not want to sit on the lawn with the "ladies." I did not want to get up and dress in the morning. Why should I, what was there to dress for? I wanted nothing they had to offer me. Why didn't they let me alone?

It was time for my medicine.

"Why do you give it to me?"

"To make you well, so you can go home to your family."

"But I don't want to get well; there's no place for me, there."

"They said yesterday, they wanted you to come home as soon as you were well, and stay right there."

What was the use of explaining? There *was* no place for me there, not for the "me" I had become. I emptied the medicine into a flower pot. A second glass was brought. Again I emptied it. "You are to take this." A third time I tipped the glass. It began to be amusing. I wondered if the plant would die. A

second nurse entered the room. She held my hands while the first nurse tried to pour the stuff down my throat. I fought. How did anyone dare to *touch* me? What did they think I was, a wild animal in a cage? I struggled harder. With a quick movement I was put flat on my back and the medicine somehow went down between clenched teeth.

I had been right. This was not my world. People did not have things like that happen to them. I lay still, utterly crushed, like a colt dragged by the halter for the first time. Then revolt began. I would learn the rules of this *new* world. It would not be easy for them. War had begun, since war seemed the tactics employed here. I had never known resentment such as that which surged upon me. It burned hot and fierce. I knew I could fight. The lust of it grew in my mind. They had held me, me a *human being*—held me! I would not forget. If they could do this, as if I seemed a beast, then I could *be* one—to them. I would not look back. I would not remember. I would only fight.

"Very serious symptoms are developing," the Doctor told my family. They were. The *thing* no longer had me; it was beginning to be incarnate in me. As insanity progressed, I lost sight of it, forgot it. I simply became an expression of it. Still there were periods of complete lucidity. I hated these almost as

much as times of confusion, because then I had to remember. No amount of effort would keep me from it. A thousand times, I would go back: I found a gay child walking beside her father. He showed her the purple shadows of a maple on the brick wall, he told her of the songs of birds. Most fascinating of all, he talked of his work, relating the history of the musical scale until each note became an individual, or causing some great composer to leave his long dead years and walk beside them. Fugue, sonata, symphony forms became as familiar as the contours of his face. The child grew up with Orlando Lasso and named her favourite kitten for Pope Gregory, of the Gregorian chants, and her second favourite for Palestrina. She went to sleep with her father's music in her ears and danced downstairs in the morning to a Chopin waltz, or more enchanting still, to a light little tune "made just for her."

The same child waited on the window seat for her father to come home at night. She watched the shadows of a vine against the window shade. When that particular group of tendrils showed more clearly, and this grew dim, he would be coming. She straightened her brief skirts, and sat up very straight. He came up the porch steps. He was tall, with a high forehead, wonderfully responsive eyes. Constantly changing expressions followed each other across his features like ripples on a

stream. He came nearer. I sat still; a woman does. He bent over my hand and kissed it. That was the moment! I was a duchess, a princess, an empress . . . anything. His respect for that small person bred in her a sense of her own value and of all other women's that nothing had been able to alter until now. "Yes, I look like a candidate for a respectful salutation. I feel like one!" Hot tears ran down my cheeks. "Why did you get born into a world at all if you have to be hurled out so far, so very far?" I wept uncontrollably. "I never heard her cry before," said the one nurse I didn't like. "You never will again," I said resentfully. "I only did it so you would call Miss M——"

"Nice manners you're getting," I thought to myself. "But what a fool thing to say to me. Why didn't she let me alone? She seemed to enjoy seeing me miserable." Well, I would deprive her of that pleasure in the future. I did not cry again for years. I stuck out my tongue at her when she turned her back. It made me feel better. She had such a long yellow face, such black, dank hair, such bold black eyes, indecently exposed by her short lashes. She made me want to scratch, so acute was my irritation. I was glad when she left the room.

5

The woman across the hall began to moan and cry. I had never heard anyone cry like that before. It was unrestrained, epic. She kept calling for her baby over and over again. She pleaded, then demanded, to be unfastened, to be "let loose." She called her husband. Again and again the low wail rose to a rich, full cry, always asking to be "freed." There was a quality to her voice, a depth and keenness to her despair that made me think of a Greek tragedy, of Hecuba, or of Niobe robbed of her last child. I rose and tiptoed across the hall. The sight of the woman dispelled all thoughts of a classic comparison. A fat, dowdy little person in a riotously fluffy boudoir cap, and a ruffled dressing gown which reduced even her grief to the element of absurdity. Yet her twisted face, and the furrows made by tears, and the purple swelling under her great cow-like brown eyes were all too real. I stood transfixed. She was tied down; a broad band across her chest was looped about her arms and fastened on each side to the iron bars of the bed. The band was of heavy tape, tan with a red stripe on each side.

"Oh, honey," she said, "come and unfasten me."

"Is it tight?" I gasped.

"No, it is not tight, but do unfasten me.

Oh, my baby ! Oh, Charlie, come and get me ! Police ! Police ! "

I tugged at the strap. A gleam of rationality came into her eyes, inspired perhaps by the complete bewilderment and recoil which my face must have expressed. " No, you better not, honey. No, the nurse wouldn't like it ; the nurse wouldn't like it." The look of sanity left her eyes ; she fell back into herself with a sudden collapse and her rich, soft voice took up the old cry again, " Charlie, Charlie, oh, my baby." I slipped away. " Come again, come again when the nurse isn't watch . . ." She did not finish . . . " Oh, untie me. Police, oh, Gracie, *Police* ! "

I sat stiff on the edge of my bed. They tied us, did they ? I had begun to identify myself with the inmates, a thing I would have burned at four days before. The nurses were " they," people apart. What kind of place could it be where people were tied ? I thought of mediaeval tortures. " But she said it wasn't tight," I pondered : " it didn't seem to hurt." I became confused. It was so unnatural, this place where one group had such power over another. It brought thoughts of " enchantment and witchcraft." The world became less and less real. An element of ghoulishness crept into my consciousness. The voice went on. I lay down. It lost all meaning for me, ceased to convey a sense of sorrow. The monotony

was lulling. I was quiet and non-thinking for a long time. That was, I suppose, the beginning of extended periods of stupor which were to come.

After a while my nurse entered the room, fresh in a pink work dress. She had most trying and revolting work to do, but seemed always to remain apart from it. She made one think of sweet milk and meadows of newly mown hay. Yet there were blue lines under her eyes. Often I was sorry for her fatigue, but in the less rational moments I took an almost sadistic delight in adding to it. Why shouldn't she be tired? What did I care? It would make me feel better if she were; it would somehow externalize my inner turmoil. She expressed, for me, my own revolt and weariness. I couldn't express it all; there was too much of it. If she was dragging about, I enjoyed it. I was somehow released and objectified by her suffering, poor little girl. It was a kind of Pygmalion attitude run backwards, like a moving picture film reversed. As she entered the room, I was so very quiet I surprised her. At last she bent over me. "Have you been asleep?" There was such real pity in her eyes, something within me softened. I stroked her hand a little.

"No. What is that woman crying for?"

"She has had a sad life."

I continued to stroke her hand; I wanted to

hold her there and get information; besides it was very pleasant.

"Why is she tied?"

"To keep her from tearing things and hurting herself."

"What does she tear things for?"

"I don't know—she just does—they do sometimes."

"How does she hurt herself? That's hard to do. I shouldn't think she could."

"She does, though. She scratches, and when she came here she had pulled nearly all her hair out."

My mind reeled. I was certainly in a strange land.

"What made her like this? She is always calling for her baby."

"She has had awful things happen to her."

"Tell me."

"It might not be good for you."

"I'd rather know; it's interesting. Tell me."

The "gossip urge" had its way with both of us.

"Well, she had a baby about a month old. She had had three before and they all died. Her heart was just set on this one. She left it lying on its little bed while she went to the neighbour's to borrow some cream. When she came back the baby had smothered itself in its pillows. She was just wild. She blamed

herself. That's why she calls police, they say. She thinks she murdered it and ought to be in jail. Sometimes she thinks she is there."

"But can't you *tell* her it wasn't her fault?" "We try, but she won't believe us. Her mind is affected. They say she is hopeless."

"Is everybody's mind affected here?" I asked cannily. The little nurse was not to be caught. "No, some are just nervous like you," she answered wisely. But I remembered the sly smile on the face of the nurse I disliked when the word "nervous" was mentioned.

I had a lot to think about. It was hard to think; I was so tired and so confused. Why didn't some one come and lift me out of this? I was worn and hot. The woman across the hall kept crying; gruesome mutters came from the back of the house. How terribly life had changed in two weeks and with what cruel swiftness. Mercifully I was realizing this less and less. A continuous temperature, which the doctors were unable to break, was having its way with me. It dulled things, wrapped them in cotton for me at times, but added immensely to my physical discomfort and blurred the edges of my already shadowed mind. It made me feel heavy; my throat was always dry, my tongue stiff. I could not get enough water. Along with this, or more probably the cause of it, was a severe attack of incipient diabetes which no one seemed to

think of just then. It had, strangely, not been discovered. The doctors were too much occupied with behaviour.

Veronal did not add much to my mental clarity. It made me feel, when I awoke, as if I had been struck by a heavy weight. The sensation did not wear off for hours. It made me miserable, but less so than the acute mental activity which usually followed its lessening effect, as the day wore on. I was given all too much of it; it is the curse of many sanatoriums. "It keeps them quiet." I learned my lesson well; you got it if you made enough "fuss"—"like an energetic baby breaking its weaker parents' will in regard to feeding regulations," I thought in brief moments of perspective.

After the nurse went away, I was limp and quiet for a long time. But . . . there *was* something I wanted to think about, or had to. Maybe I would after a while. Just now I was fairly comfortable; my head did not ache. I could just lie and be still . . . if only there wasn't something I had to think about. I would put it off. I watched the sunlight filter through the leaves of near-by trees. It made me think of myself, as a mere tike, sitting in my sister's lap. She was "telling me poems" . . . "the leaves clapped their hands with glee" . . . Those leaves had been on a slender sugar maple just outside my window; they

were very new and bright because it was spring; and transparent because they were young. They were just learning how to clap their hands, I remembered thinking. I was cool then and light. Now I seemed weighted. I had been so light I could move as if breeze-tossed myself. I could go downstairs as one does in dreams of flying and make the top of the cherry tree as easily as a squirrel . . . "what was it I had to think about?" Not yet, I would wait. "The leaves clapped their hands." . . . Well, they still did, in these strange trees, in this strange place, but they were not young leaves, nor very gay. They were old, with a hint of fall, and they rustled with an ominous sound of their own reedy, woodwind funeral march. I *wanted* my own sugar maple, again.

Sleep came. When I opened my eyes I was still thinking of the sugar maple and the sunlight. I woke to find it dark, a sudden rain had hastened the twilight. I was alone. Everything was still save for the queer murmurs of that house. Houses have each their own undercurrents of sound. Doors shut, walls settle; shades vibrate in every house just a little differently. These were not at all the sounds I had had in my mind when I went to sleep. What sounds were they? Then I remembered; yes, I knew. And the woman across the hall . . . that was what I had to

think about. I might as well do it now. She was tied down. Would I be? She was hopeless. Was I? She tore things and scratched. Heaven knew I felt like it often enough. Would I really do it? It might be a relief. How would it feel to be tied down; maybe I would have to find out. But she *looked* so awful! Anyway I didn't wear a ruffled boudoir cap. I wouldn't look like that.

But what I really had to figure out was this place. Did I always have to stay here? How could I get away? What did one have to do to get away? I did not want to be here for years; I did not want to look like poor Mrs. Woodsley in the back room. Her hair was cut short, her figure shapeless in a blue cotton dress. She had a hat with a weary paradise plume, that had been on her head when she came twenty-five years before. A fine specimen I'd be in my dark red felt sport hat when I became fifty! And Mrs. Woodsley had been much more of a person than I would ever be. She was a graduate of the Conservatory of Paris. She still played intricate old tunes with a great deal of style and feeling on a cracked piano—only the melodies broke and interfered with each other, and the harmonies were wrenched and disconnected. It was such music as comes from neither earth, nor heaven, nor hell, but limbo—cold space filled with great hopes that will not quiet into the fixed

certainty of despair. She was still here. How could I know I wouldn't be—in thirty years.

The woman across the way let her own baby smother itself; I had tried to put life out with hot, sweet fumes; Mrs. Woodsley had broken down in the midst of her most important recital, ruined her career, because she received word that her husband, whom she adored, had been sentenced to prison for forgery. My ears rang with tales like that. In the world I came from one only hears of such things rarely and briefly . . . in my world of books, and dog-eared scores, heated discussions as to the tempo of that phrase, the interpretation of that *motif*, or the stress to be given to this theme.

How was I to get back to that world? This became my great preoccupation. "I suppose," I thought to myself, "I suppose, by doing all the stupid things the nurses tell you to." No, I was not sure. I recalled sharply being laid flat on my back and forced to take that disgusting medicine, probably a mere placebo at best. A feeling of stinging rage rose up within me. "Perhaps the way to get out is to break all rules, to fight, to use force." These diverse methods wrestled within me, divided me still further, split my consciousness with a deep cleft that remained and grew deeper as the months went on.

6

Steps in the hall! The word "company." Maybe it was *she*. I burrowed my head on the pillow and waited, my breath coming in hard chunks. "If it is, I can't stand it, I can't, I can't," I ground out with chattering teeth. The person who so abruptly and without apparent reason took possession of my mind was a woman some years older than I. She had been teaching art in the University for a number of years and while her subject was not mine it was based on a firm foundation of educational philosophy. There was much here that I could apply. I became enrolled in her classes. She was mature, self-possessed with a dignity and reticence that were singularly provocative of a desire to penetrate the cool New England envelope and find what forces lay beneath. That she had force and magnetism was daily attested by the attitude of her pupils. Had she been a royal potentate, they could not have assumed more deferential attitude. Her aloofness held them as if by a spell. If she smiled upon them, it was as though the sun itself had condescended; if she frowned, they grew cold with a sense of banishment. Even the most poised stood, as they expressed it, "tightening their belts and pulling up their boot straps" before they dared approach her.

She created this " court " not by her manner —she was always direct and simple—but by an impression of unexpressed and latent power. She maintained a most scrupulously impartial attitude towards her following. No one was ever singled out unless she were in trouble ; then Miss Winthrop was immediately attentive, until the difficulty was removed. She reserved her personal connections for her peers. Of that phase of her life we knew almost nothing.

She was good to look upon—not tall, but broad-shouldered and amply built. Her hair was wound about her head like a soft silk scarf ; her eyes were a cool searching grey. She dressed usually in dull blues. " She never has any lace unless it's real," the whisper went, " and she sends to New York for those lovely slippers and gloves—she's terribly particular about gloves." Perhaps this perfection of detail was a factor in the atmosphere of being set apart which Miss Winthrop conveyed, however unconsciously.

My acquaintance with her progressed slowly, though the fact that I was not a regular student in the college and had a teaching position placed me on a somewhat different level from my classmates. I was never responsive ; somehow I felt that I must match her dignity with a reticence of my own. Conversation with her seemed, and often was, difficult ; there were long silences. However, for about six months

or so before my disappearance from polite society we met frequently outside of University hours.

One day the whole relationship changed. I was in deep trouble. She saw it. She, too, had been meeting a long, nerve-splitting strain. That cool reserve was but an armour of defence. Through her sympathy a breach was made in it. She put me in her "inside pocket" and we reached a place of mutual interplay of thought and feeling. I was no longer "a student"; I became almost a peer. If the Venus of Melos had come off her dusty pedestal in the University library and asked me to go for a stroll, I could not have been more astonished, particularly as Miss Winthrop usually took the initiative.

We found great relief in each other's society, sitting for hours in the twilight or early dark of winter, saying little, only resting and creeping away from the snags of the day. There was a warmth and glow to it, and above all, a sense that the wall of solitude, behind which one must live, had given way. At least we could grasp hands across it.

Though we saw increasingly more of each other as the spring drew near, yet I never got over being astonished at her apparent desire to be with me. She who had been so cold was now so warm. I mentioned my pleasure and astonishment to a very wise person. "I have

been thinking about that," said he ; " I wonder if your attitude is quite wholesome."

" What do you *mean* ? "

Then he told me of an experience he had just seen some one through, a girl who had shown every sign of lover-like adoration to another girl. " It did not work. I would hate to see you twist a friendship that way . . . especially just now."

I grew cold. I had heard of school-girl " crushes," had even been touched by them, though lightly on account of my sense of the ridiculous. But of anything of that kind between adults, I was quite ignorant. I was depressed enough to believe the worst of any situation. It was one of the few times when the facts of existence have given me a sense of shock. That did ; it made me sick. I hated the thought of the unnatural. I felt somehow soiled even to be considering it. " You don't mean there could be anything like that in *my* attitude toward Miss Winthrop ? "

" I would go easy," he replied.

The relationship was pretty well spoiled. I became self-conscious and questioning. I doubted myself ; I could not doubt her, and yet . . . " What a dirty-faced world ! "

We continued to see each other, until my adviser, who had been watching me very carefully, said again, " You look so tired and white when you have been with Miss Winthrop." No wonder. I was suffocated, prostrated,

poisoned by self-hatred. I knew he was right; my self-possession had been slipping rapidly the last few days. But why had I been singled out for such humiliation, such misery? Nothing like this had ever come near me before though nearly all my friends, like Miss Winthrop, were older than I. The magnetized pull of my thoughts in her direction—when I had other uses for them—the warm, dreamy, stopped, languorous feeling that came upon me sometimes in her presence were all new. No woman or girl had ever been so wrapt in an emotional mist before. What *was* it? Certainly nothing that accorded either with my real desires or my upbringing. It was humiliating—and yet it had the quality of a welcome anæsthetic. This latter element was its greatest attraction. "What, *what*?" It was to be many long, long months before I understood that this disturbing element was but a bit of smoke rising from the volcano burning within my consciousness. It had nothing to do with the object of my devotion, everything to do with that all-consuming inner flame that was about to burst forth and consume me. The outer crust of reserve, of quiet affection, good-fellowship, was thin and broken. The fumes of distorted emotionalism, the forerunners of madness, were pouring forth steadily and insidiously.

The problem of adjustment was almost

insoluble. "What shall I do?" I asked my counsellor. "Try to see her as little as you can without hurting her."

Undoubtedly he knew; he knew better than I, yet I could not quite believe him. At the same time so complete was my sense of general calamity it seemed only fitting, just then, that the *one* person who really meant much, who offered any solution to difficulties, should prove impossible of access. As carefully as might be, I tried to break off the relationship. I was very clumsy, partly because I was unwilling. Things grew strained. I was faced with a conflict between my loyalty and affection for my friend, and my own failing. Being worn and mentally out of hand, the situation took on an absurd importance in my thinking. The worst phase was my conviction that I had been disloyal. In all my life I had never lost a friend; and the one thing which had always worn me out was friction or altercation with anyone. It made me physically ill. But I had to make this break—somehow. With characteristic directness Miss Winthrop asked me one day why my attitude toward her had changed. I crumpled and stumbled miserably. I could say nothing. Her straightforwardness was completely convincing. Though I never doubted her, yet nevertheless I felt my counsellor was right. "It was me and me only—Faugh!"

The volcanic pressure persisted. The whole affair was merely symptomatic of its progress. Clutched in my hand with the bottle which nearly settled all earthly problems for me was a letter addressed to her containing an hysterical apology for my disloyalty. I had never turned my back on a friend before; I could not stand doing it now. Needless to say, the letter also was symptomatic.

As I lay in the sanatorium thinking about her, the distortion becane stupendous. Undoubtedly my adviser knew about the letter; he knew everything. Perhaps he would charge Miss Winthrop with having been careless in her relation to me. Yet, how could he? . . . Perhaps everyone knew it; perhaps she had lost her position; perhaps she was coming now to face me down, to show me what I had done. The footsteps in the hall came nearer. I flattened myself out and buried my head in the pillow like the traditional ostrich, in the sand. What a terrible, resounding hall, and how *long*! The steps were coming closer, closer, *closer*. They were *at my door*! . . . Then they turned into the room across the hall, and I heard a voice say: "See, Etta, I have brought you a new boudoir cap, lavender with a pink rose." I burst into helpless laughter at the thought of how "Etta" would look in the lavender cap aloft her puffy face and a straight jacket. She had been wearing a straight jacket, lately.

7

In the next few weeks all that was normal fled very quickly "She is getting worse every day," they reported. I was. One of the chief signs lay in the weakening of all inhibitions. That which makes an individual, moral, decent, considerate, modest, kind, had gone—it had snapped. Except for short intervals of complete and painful lucidity, I had receded into some dim twilight such as the caveman may have known. Primitive impulses had their way. The result was more insidious because almost always there was a hint of the "watcher," the "censor" left, just enough to gloat over the show, not enough to control or in any way size up the situation. This led to a studied devilishness at times, rather worse than mere torrential violence, or primitive naturalness; there was sometimes an element of semiconscious display.

I became greedy. I snapped at my food like a dog; I licked my fingers like a savage. "You can't go to the table like that. I shall have to bring trays," said the worn little nurse. "Hate the table anyway." It gave me pleasure to be brought trays and watch the disgust on her face. The world was horrid; everything was horrid. The only possible way to get anything out of it was to be still more so—to lead in the rôle which fate had put upon me.

I began also to be utterly disregardful of personal appearance. I refused to make the slightest effort. I loathed being touched. The combination did not simplify life for those in attendance. "What are you tearing that silk petticoat for? I shall have to mend it." "Glad you will." "But I have so much to do. Do you *like* to see me work?" "Yes, that's what you're here for." Poor little Miss M . . .

"If I had a pretty rose-coloured kimono, I'd wear it," said the Head Nurse.

"I don't want to."

"You don't look very well that way."

"I don't care."

"It isn't very nice; that's what I think," said the little nurse. "I thought you were so sweet when you first came." An inward twinge only served to make me all the more "exhibitionistic," a bad four year old. I pitched covers and garments right and left. The nurses left the room. "You ought to be ashamed," said the little nurse.

I spat in response.

Sex began to manifest itself in the only way it could, by turning in on itself. I was, during my worst periods, a mere expression of the great drives, hunger, fear, sex—the element of self-preservation alone was lacking. I did not care about living and I never forgot my disinclination. The words "secret,"

"solitary" are, I believe, usually associated with the phenomenon of a sex expression which is purely solo. But there was not even reticence about this. I didn't care; I would go as far as I liked. At other times the faintest suggestion of it brought a terrific recoil.

This phase had begun to show itself before I broke—to my horror. I had struggled and felt utterly damned and disgraced. It seemed so entirely beneath any human being, so crawling! I had told a physician about it after I reached the sanatorium. He seemed to take the matter quite for granted, remarked that with a general "breakdown," lots of things "got loose," and not to bother. Telling him was like walking across a red hot gridiron; I had done it, in a moment of clarity, because I felt it necessary for him to know all my symptoms were he to help me. His matter-of-factness comforted me, but it did not last long. My horror of the thing had been too genuine.

Around it grew up a persistent delusion, broken only by those times of desperation when "I didn't care," when I deliberately tried to be as exasperating, as disgusting as possible; behaving badly, putting my inner perturbation into effect, seemed to lessen it, "get it off my chest." The only trouble was that I did this so thoroughly that it usually resulted in a

complete reaction and brought about a period of lucidity in which I remembered my performances and scorched! It was just then, when I was coming into one of these lucid periods or just going out, that the delusion developed, I think.

The delusion was based on a kind of megalomania, I suppose, a delusion of greatness—not great valour, or grandeur, not great accomplishment, but great villainy. I had, while under this spell, a tremendous sense of my own importance. With it went a feeling of being in the public eye. "The whole world knows what I have done," I would moan. When a "scare" extra was called by importunate newsboys, I shrank into myself. "It's me . . . I am worse than the Kaiser, a Hun." It was all because this very common sex manifestation had so eaten into my mind that, being in my own consciousness acutely, I thought it must, perforce, be in every one's; it had "got out," "appeared in the papers"; it had contaminated childhood, destroyed those youngsters whose musical education had been entrusted to me. The delusion piled itself up to monstrous heights, and filled my mind with hot visions which, mingled with fever dreams, sent me whirling over the brink of sanity with terrific speed.

8

My youthful connection with the "lambent flame"—I think the movies call it—had been restricted, yet none the less active. A violinist, a friend of my father, much older than I, had held my affections absolutely for fifteen years, since I was ten. No one else existed for me. So far as real emotions went, boys of my age might just as well have been mere shadows, though I did envy the popularity of other girls, and their "fun." The violinist was tall, slender, dark, played with a gypsy-like abandon, composed melodies that seemed to me rich and moving, though to a maturer taste they sounded a bit florid and "over done." He was married to a pre-Raphaelite beauty who had a strong predilection for chewing caraway seeds and wore her golden hair in a seed pearl net when she dressed for dinner. I couldn't stand her; neither could he, but his romantic conception of life kept him faithful to the chivalric ideal she had once embodied for him. I adored him for that.

At first his attitude toward me was that of a Pygmalion. He had found an acutely alive child who responded like his bow to his lightest suggestion. He played to me; listened patiently hour in and hour out to my own struggles; took me into his confidence; encouraged me, caressed me and left me in a gleaming world.

No human creature was he, but a being from a distant land seen through a gold-flecked cloud. He was handsome to my eyes, clever, generous to a fault. He was gay when I wanted him gay, serious when I was plunged into some prematurely philosophical frame of mind. He soothed my tempers and my tears. He was romance, the innocent romance of childhood. The prince in Cinderella, the Lohengrin of fancy.

Every bit of music he composed was submitted gravely to my approval. I criticized ruthlessly ; for some strange reason he listened and altered his melodies to meet my demands. Every concert triumph was placed at my feet ; every word of praise he received was for me—did I not stand beside him, a slim eager child visible to him every moment as he played ? " My audience could not see you, but you were nearer than the violin beneath my cheek." All this for me ! I felt unworthy of his lightest thought.

One day a new element entered in. He had been his usual self, no more impulsive than was his wont. But when he left I felt weak and spent—scorched. I did not know why any more than a leaf singed by a torch would know. But the edges of my joy in him were burned and turning brown while yet I bent more eagerly to his coming. I was growing up. He would not see. His tactics were unchanged.

I tried half-heartedly to find room to grow, but his " brotherly " embraces hemmed me in.

On a certain afternoon he was out in the country with friends. " I will be back at four —though the heavens fall." He did not come. It was the first time he had failed me. I was not merely disappointed ; I was cut by a new inward writhing. I was, perhaps, a little jealous, but that was not the cause of my twisting, curled-up longing. I wanted him to come into the room where I was waiting with a terrifying intensity. Did he not know ?

He did *not* ! It was I, at last, who was forced to question the relationship. By the time I was sixteen I suffered keenly because of it. His presence was as necessary to me as light and air—he had always been there. Yet I was soon wilted by his warmth, vexed and thwarted by a lover-like frenzy which never reached any goal. I was unconscious of the meaning of my discomfort, would have protested violently if anyone had been able to make it plain to me. No one was. I very much doubt if love is blind, but infatuation and innocence—particularly when the latter is prolonged as a protective state—are not only blind, but deaf mutes into the bargain.

Emotionally I was leading a life comparable to accounts of the enamoured woman of the Renaissance accepting wholly the " Greek revival " *and* the devotions of her faithful

troubadour; intellectually I was a shy child, resisting my own forces, trying, not very enthusiastically, to hold his in leash. Throughout my "grown up" period he was never anything but a lover to my senses; a brother in my thoughts. I never forgot the lady of his choice—nor did he. I burned myself to ashes again and again, then tried to swallow the ashes with a smile. At last a definite break was arranged by those in power, my elders. I was crushed, but helpless to protest, so weary was I from a prolonged cleavage of personality, so loyal to his loyalty to the Burne-Jones beauty, so unquestioning as to his "platonic" affection for me. After that, life was blank for a long time.

It was little wonder that I fell prey to the "great push," twisted as it was, and battered out of all natural form by the battered life I was leading in a sanatorium for "nervous people." When the brain cells gave way which enable one to eat ashes and so maintain the proprieties I found I had dug a ditch of ignominy before I reached it. Having reached it, I wallowed.

9

My moods, in the days that followed, went by increasingly sharp contraries. One day I was a greedy beast; the next, realizing more keenly my unhappy state, I refused to touch

food. "You will have to eat this luncheon. You need it to grow strong." Silence. "Eat that chop." Silence. "If you don't I'll call the doctor." Silence. "You needn't think you can starve yourself to death around here. We have ways of *making* people eat. We tube-feed them." I had read enough of suffragettes and forced feeding not to try the experiment, just then. I ate reluctantly, pondering this changed aspect of life. I could not accommodate myself to a state of things where personal freedom did not exist, and where force was used. Again and again I attacked the problem. Personal responsibility, freedom to make one's own mistakes and profit by them, seemed to me the law of life. How could they expect one to live in this place? It was like expecting a limb that was tied down to grow strong; atrophy would most certainly result. I was utterly unprepared for the taking of what seemed to me senseless orders, doing things merely because "the others were." It was not co-operation; it was slavery. Why had I been given only one point of view, if this was to be my life? I might at least have been told about this strange mode of arranging existence. I had been trained to consider enforced control merely childish.

My mind balked at the difficulties; you can't get very far trying to rationalize the workings of a sanatorium for the insane. "I like the

old way best," I said under my breath. "Do they really think I can endure it?" I bit the pillow case and tore it a little with my teeth. It was a rest to project my misery. I gave the sheet a pull. "Stop tearing those bed clothes." I continued joyously in a purely infantile revolt. "Leave that sheet alone; there is no sense to what you are doing." I gave the sheet a skilful jerk; it, in turn, gave a grand muslin whistle and nearly halved. The Head Nurse entered. A band was slipped over my chest. My hands were bound; my feet were tied to the foot of the bed with a cleverly made noose. I watched the process with interest. I did not mind. It was something new; broke the monotony. It was a bother to my "keepers" and I was in a mood to appreciate the fact.

Then, too, it was rather pleasant to be tied down, not to have to hold oneself still by main force. If I twisted and turned, the tapes and the sheet which held my feet were pleasantly taut. A definite, physical thing responded to my inner tension; I was like a baby, I suppose, who wants something to *kick* against when exercising its muscles.

After a while I began to grow tired of lying on my back. My shoulders ached. "Take these things off." "Will you behave?" I grew hot with rage at the word. Was I a six year old? I had not been misbehaving. I had

only been trying to find some way out of my intolerable agony of confusion.

"No, I won't."

"You may lie there then."

I lay for a long time. I ached more and more. It became rather interesting. The ache started in my shoulders and went down my spine, vertebra by vertebra, as if it were walking downstairs. It increased the dull pain, which I had continuously at the back of my head. It was rather nice to ache; it kept one from wondering so much about "dumb" things. In a little while the pain at the base of my brain became so severe it occupied my exclusive attention. A definitely outlined area felt very hot, rimmed as if with still hotter wires, burning white. It was a steady ache, no throb, no sharp darts, just ache like a heavy volume of sound. I turned my head a little on my pillow as the Head Nurse entered. I must have looked blanched. She released me quickly.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It's my head in back; it hurts, but it doesn't hurt as much as *I* do, usually." She seemed to understand, put cool things over the ache, gave me the ever welcome veronal, and sat beside me for a long time. Her presence was soothing. It was like home; like being a little girl again. Tears of gratitude and exhaustion slipped beneath my lids as I went to sleep.

When I awoke the next morning, I endured being roused and fussed over rather well, because it didn't seem to come near me. I could feel the nurse's fingers, but she didn't seem there, herself. Beyond my reaction to her touch I was unable to project her into my consciousness. I could see her but it made little impression. Everything was like that. I was veiled. It was quiet and restful, but a little wearing after a time. I tried to brush something cobwebby from before me ; it would not brush. Sounds came to my ears. They meant little besides just noise. I was unable to translate them into the milkman's cart, the doctor's machine, the ice-cream freezer. They were just so many vibrations hitting my ear-drums.

I was quite conscious. I could think of abstract things clearly. I could picture affairs at home ; remember melodies, visualize scores more accurately than I had been able to, for days, but my immediate environment was blurred—save for the interlacing reeds of the rocker in which I sat. I picked up a book. It was easy, the meaning readily comprehensible. My heart gave a leap ; I was better.

I did not, of course, understand that I was worse. Up to this time, I had, at least, been making an effort to respond to outside stimuli, and do individual, abstract thinking at the same time. Now, at times, I could only carry

on one type of thought process. Outside contacts were somehow broken. Not being bothered with them I was apparently able to concentrate upon my own inner ideas the more easily. The state was comparable to the difference between the distinctness with which one experiences things in dreams, undisturbed by actuality, and the more or less shadowy act of remembering. Mentally I was in the sad state of a hypothetical tennis player who, if he keeps his eye on the ball, loses control of the racquet, and while managing his racquet successfully cannot keep track of the ball. I could not handle the external and internal simultaneously. A serious cleavage had developed, creating an eerie and unnatural break between the universe of fact and my own personality.

A creepy world surrounded me when I looked up from my book. Things were there, and yet were not there. I could see them but they had no substance. I felt decidedly sick, and kept my eyes determinedly upon what I was reading. Very soon I grew so tired the book would no longer register; I had to raise my eyes. I crawled over to my bed and lay down. I could only remember a little of what I had been reading. Too weary to try, I clutched the iron rail of the bed. It was strong and cool and alone saved me from complete vacuum.

I became aware, after a time, that I seemed the only object in the room which was not moving. Everything rotated in a circle about me—I knew it didn't—yet the circle kept going faster and faster. It made me think of an illustration in Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* where the Vain Questioner sits on the swinging planet, Saturn, its nebulous band swirling about him while he sings :

> Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
> I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
> And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road ;
> But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

The movement of which I was conscious was like that of the swirling ball. It made me think, also, of my childish conception of the nebular hypothesis, of the world whirled from star dust into compactness. The circling band went swiftly and yet more swiftly. I clung to my bed like a drowning sailor to a mast. I was very miserable, but unprotesting. I was too weak to protest. I simply lay there and endured ; I had ceased to struggle. A new factor appeared, a dull, hopeless animal-like acceptance of whatever came. This held me through many hours, but it was not a good sign. Lethargy, despair, complete passivity came in its wake, to be followed in turn by the most violent activity. I was embarked upon a sea of hot, dead calm, and hurricanes. The

rhythm of life was new and profoundly disturbing. I felt sicker and sicker. I was utterly unable to develop sea legs.

Hours, and then days followed when the world around me hardly existed at all, save in brief flashes. I have no definite recollection of anything, only a sense of feverish restlessness and discomfort, and certain brief fantastic obsessions. As an example, I had recently been making some researches in regard to the musical instruments of the Egyptians. In so doing I had become interested in other things Egyptian and had read as much as crowded days would permit. Waking one hot night, I found myself cold with apprehension thinking: "What if the Egyptians were right, and the philosophers ever since wrong? What if the true immortality of the soul does depend on the preservation of the body? What if those we care most about are even now going through dim spaces, moaning and upbraiding us for their lost peace?" I could see these spirits, with familiar faces, surrounded by an obscuring grey cloud, floating through icy distances, calling, calling in voices muffled by a hopeless grief—dead voices. I could see the old Egyptians in bright sunlight, glorious with the pomp and fullness of life, richly gay, perfumed, rejoicing in the lovely "lotus land" of death. "This is what we have done; this is what *I* have done to those whom I had most

desired to serve." Doubt and guilt were like a crushing weight, that nothing could lift. I cried out and would not be still. "She's had one dose to-night, but we'll have to give her another. She is disturbing the other patients." Veronal was forthcoming to keep me quiet.

The next step in the process of dissolution was a complete snuffing out of my individuality. Life became, for short periods, a blank. One night coming to sudden consciousness in a flash of lightning, followed by a tremendous thunder crash, I called out, "Have the enemy gotten over? Are they bombing?" The nurses laughed. That was reassuring, though it made me a bit angry. I did not like being laughed at. Two of the nurses were talking in my room, one sitting on the edge of her bed combing her long, yellow hair. I looked at her. Who was she? Who was I? I did not know. Just this room, the storm outside, something that questioned . . . I was within four walls, companioned by two strangers; I existed, save for these, in unpeopled space. It was pleasant to "be back again." The two were nice to me, but rather superior in their attitude, and apparently amused at everything I said—it's good to be amusing, and yet there was something decidedly queer about this.

"Oh, my shoe—get me my shoe. Don't come in here. Damn this bed. I had soft

pillows at home with lace on them, and linen sheets. Hell! Oh, my shoe." A cracked voice that went into one like a rusty screw, cutting its way through the thunder. It was old "Granny Stevens," "disturbed" by the storm. "That means me," said one of the nurses and rose unwillingly. Then I knew and I shivered. The space beyond that room was again filled with memories of people, with warm fires, and cool seas, sunny streets, and fresh, rain-washed fields. Little Tip was there, and Jane in her emerald green bathing suit, her red hair gleaming like a shooting star as she flew along the beach. I should never see her again—never—I thrashed about the bed for hours. "Don't you know I have to have some sleep," called the exhausted nurse. "I shall have to tie you if you aren't quiet." I was too keenly aware to want to be tied down. I held myself quiet. Control was still *just* possible at the price of overwhelming and unbending effort.

10

"Put on your hat."

"Where am I going?"

"You are going home."

"Going home." I stifled with joy, yet doubted. I knew I had not remembered much for a long time. A scratch on the nurse's face, three torn dresses, and a cracked mirror, all

visible just then, told a tale of non-improvement.

" You are going in an automobile."

I put on my prettiest dress, green and white lawn, combed my hair for the first time in weeks, and was most particular about the angle of my hat. I had a motive behind me. " She seems better," they whispered.

I said good-bye to the Head Nurse, whom I really loved and, I think, even thanked her for being so kind to me. I wondered why there were tears in her eyes. " You must come and see us ; we shall be happy any time," I called.

" I *can't* take her," gulped my little nurse to the one I did not like. " You'll have to." She turned away quickly and ran upstairs.

There were two strangers in the machine. Immediately I asked for my family. " They are busy; they couldn't come." That was queer, but I was unable to carry any idea very far. " Who is that man sitting by the driver?" His neck was long and red beneath his bowler hat. I did not like him. " He is the sheriff," answered the nurse with an oily smile.

I wondered a bit at that, but was too preoccupied with streets, people, cars, buildings, to consider it for long. I had seen none of these things for six weeks. Above all, I was going home. Nothing else mattered. I was going home—*home*! The locked door was opened at last.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HOUSE OF DISTORTION

1

IT was a small room, with bare floors and walls. The latter were a gloomy green save where the plaster had fallen in fantastic shapes. It was furnished with a narrow hospital bed, and a mottled looking, plain wooden chair. The curtainless windows were barred. A smell of antiseptics and of yellow soap pervaded the place. Unfamiliar sounds came from the long hall outside. Where the white spread had fallen back, an area of rough blanket set my teeth on edge. I was pretty well dazed and completely at loss as to my whereabouts. My room looked more like a prison cell than anything I could think of, but I was kept in bed all the time, and surely you were not kept in bed in prison unless you felt much worse than I did. Still, where else could I be? I tried very hard to think what I had done that would have resulted in a penal sentence; there didn't seem to be anything; also I could remember no court proceedings. You always had to go to court.

Maybe it was the prison infirmary. Every one seemed sick or convalescing. Perhaps I had been too ill to appear for a trial. I would listen and watch very carefully; perhaps some one would drop a hint. I did not see very many people. Occasionally a face would appear for a moment and a strange voice would ask: "Are you sick?" or "Are you new?" Such faces! Twisted with pain; blank with complete cessation from struggle and with clear uncomprehending eyes; malevolent from useless plotting and scheming; shifty as the result of a long line of unstable, degenerate forbears; pinched with suffering and longing; grey with weariness; all haunted and tragic, all tousled and ridiculous. The nurses came infrequently to see what I needed. I refused to talk to them or to answer questions. The Doctor came twice a day. She seemed very lovely to me. I wanted to respond to her, but I would not allow myself to do so. I remained as cold and hard as possible. These people had lied to me! I was going home, they said. I had been brought here instead. For perhaps half an hour I had been happy—then thrown back deeper, further than ever from all hope. This had not angered me, only put me very much on my guard. They had had their one chance; they should not get me under their power. Though I was behind bars infinitely distant

from all that I cared for, I would be still further from them. Though they spoke to me and touched me, I would remain withdrawn. "She does not co-operate at all," was the report given to those who inquired about me. "She" did not. I was encountering a completely new experience; I had never been lied to before by anyone who counted in the least. There was no possible way of combating this lie; there was no one to ask about it, to complain to. I was thrown back upon myself. I would stay there.

This had a most damaging effect in two ways. It was months and months before I could be prevailed upon to trust anyone; often I broke into open revolt. Then, too, it widened the gulf between me and the outside world immeasurably, jammed me back into my own inner world of confused thoughts and questionings, weary hates, and still wearier longings. I was broken, miserable enough, ill enough just then, so that had the barrier of distrust not existed, some one might have got a very strong hold upon me, strong enough perhaps to work even when I was quite unconscious of presence or personality. As it was I remained alone, not knowing where I had been taken, or with whom, inwardly questioning, listening, outwardly stony. I would have bitten off my tongue before I would have asked these people, who *lied*, for the simplest bit of information.

One day the House Supervisor came to my room. She had deep, kind brown eyes.

"What do you do?" I asked. She outlined her duties. "Then you have mostly to do with sheets and linens and not much with people who are here?"

"Yes."

"Do you know when they are coming?"

"Not always. I look after their things when they do, though."

"Did you know I was coming?"

"No, I only knew you were here because your pretty dresses came to me to be marked."

I smiled. She had not lied. I would like her, I thought. Only I hardly ever saw her. She never had time to talk, but she gave me a warm comfortable feeling whenever she appeared. She had such a kindly, homely way of bobbing about with little short steps; and she was always freshly starched and white. "She could stand alone if she did not have any feet," I thought. The fact that she was not "in power" was a great comfort.

One day my clothes, much damaged by the laundry, were given to me. I could get up. I walked somewhat timidly into the corridor. It was very long and wide, with innumerable small doors on each side; in the centre were four rather pretentious arches with self-conscious looking pendentives that were not needed as there was no dome—though one

had been begun. One of these arches led to the parlour. Here were many long windows, barred. On each window sill sat a pot of stiff-looking flowers. The furniture was mid-Victorian at its most impressive level. A large, grand piano with yellow keys filled the right-hand side of the room. A number of people were sitting about; one woman perched on the piano stool worked the pedals as she knitted. That struck me as unusual. I waited, standing close to a plaster-covered column topped by a Gothic-American capital. It was rather a long wait, and quite awkward. It was a novel experience for me to be confronted by a room of strange people with no one to introduce me.

At last, one of the nurses, very young and pretty, took me by the arm and led me towards the sofa. I was presented to Mrs. Stevens, a woman all in black, wearing a jacket of the year 1893 or so, a full black skirt and a widow's veil. She was evidently a gentlewoman; her hands were slim, her skin incredibly youthful and fair, though her hair was distinctly grey.

"Are you a visitor or an inmate?" she asked.

"I don't know."

"I am an inmate. I have been for fifteen years, fifteen years of cruel persecution. My son is here too, in the men's ward. It's infamous."

"At least she did not say 'prisoner,'" I

thought. I questioned her a little, but somehow her replies were indefinite. Almost every sentence ended in an invective against nurses, doctors, or superintendent. I was an object of immediate curiosity. Women crowded around, asked questions, felt my dress, examined my slippers, commented upon my appearance generally. The things they said seemed most irrelevant, and I was certainly not used to being inspected instead of greeted.

"Mrs. Galloway is to have company," announced the nurse. Some of us slipped out into the hall; some remained in the parlour. I sat on a little seat that was edged in between a couple of columns. The usher, a flapper-looking person in blue, brought in the "company." It was a nice, little weasel of a man, with carroty moustache and whitish hair; he greeted Mrs. Galloway affectionately, presented her with a basket of fruit and a pink sunbonnet and a pair of green spectacles. "It's what you asked for," I heard him say. He talked for perhaps half an hour, said good-bye with even more kindly affection and left. "Hope you'll come again soon," said Mrs. Galloway. "It's her husband," whispered the woman next to me; "he comes every week."

I pondered. "Her husband and she hopes he'll come again soon"—a queer attitude to take toward a husband. The husbands I knew about either left in the morning and came

home at night, or else they didn't come at all. What kind of husbands did they have in this place? Mrs. Galloway looked quite happy; she did not seem to feel badly to have him leave. She passed her fruit around. I pressed my teeth against the soft, lush skin of a dainty apricot, and looked up at her wonderingly.

"It's a good man I've got. It ain't him that brought me here, like many a woman's husband has; no, it ain't him. It's my eyes that done it. It's my eyes; I had the mumps and they settled in my eyes." With this she carefully adjusted her green spectacles low on her nose so that she could look over the top. She was never without them after that.

A piercing scream tore through the air. I was not startled; nothing would have astonished me because everything was so completely astonishing. "That's Miss Sally; she thinks a crocodile is after her." I held my head in my hands. Why did Miss Sally think a crocodile was after her? There were certainly no crocodiles outside of zoos. Why didn't some one tell her that? Why did they let her be so terribly afraid? Again the scream rose sharper, higher. It made one feel that surely something must soon break in the instrument that produced it. No one moved. Why didn't they *do* something? Why *didn't* they go to her assistance? There was, of course, no answer to such questions. Ever

more strongly there came over me the sense of being in some place of evil and at the same time absurd enchantment. Everything was upside down and backwards and topsy-turvy. And no one seemed to think it strange or question it at all.

It is baffling business trying to explain the activities of patients in an insane asylum, and it is little wonder that under the pressure of a constant effort to do this I became more and more confused. There was no reality here to help me. Conditions were so far removed from normal living that they actually aided my sense of cleavage, rather than cleared it up, as they are supposed to do. The few habits of ordinary living that remained with me were broken down by a new and rigidly enforced routine, having no connection with any phase of life I had ever known. My last moorings were cut.

The Doctor entered the ward. The nurses straightened their caps ; the patients smoothed their hair, put down their sewing or made some move that showed they recognized the importance of the moment. I hardly lifted my eyes. She spent a great deal of time behind those little shut doors where the sick were. Sometimes as she left she was followed by kindly words, often by bold curses. She entered the parlour and talked with the women, answering innumerable questions, and giving advice and

help where she could. Then she came and sat down beside me.

"I am glad to see you up. Do you feel better?"

"Yes."

"Don't you think we have a pretty nice ward here?"

"No."

She looked a little puzzled.

"You see all the others are doing something, sewing or knitting. Wouldn't you like to do some work too?"

"No."

"Don't you like to sew?"

"No."

"Or to knit?"

"No."

"Would you rather just sit and do nothing?'

"Yes."

She tried another tack. "I had a talk with a member of your family to-day. I think one of them will come and see you to-morrow. Would you like to see her?"

"Yes."

"She asked if you would like her to bring anything. Would you?"

"No."

She rose and spoke to the nurse in a low voice.

"Will she talk to you?"

"She has said very little."

"I find her so monosyllabic." Monosyllabic, yes. I would not give an inch. These people had nothing to do with me. Why should I answer their questions. And yet . . . she was very charming; I liked the way she listened to the women in the ward. It would have been a relief to question her. But no, I would *not* . . . that lie. As she left, a desperate group crowded about her. "Doctor, I been here long enough. My little girl's only ten. I want to go home. I can't stand this place any longer." "Say, Doctor, my folks is comin' Sunday. Can I go out on the lawn?" "Doctor, won't you send this letter for me; it's not letter day, but I have some important business with my lawyer; he's going to see to my rights. There's no law to keep a person shut up like a dog." It was endless in its desires, this clamorous ward. With difficulty the Doctor made her escape, placating some, leaving others scolding and muttering with rage.

"Dinner, ladies," called the pretty nurse with an amused twinkle in her eye. The "ladies" rose—never was a word used more incongruously.

> "Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,
> The beggars are coming to town,
> Some in rags and some in tags
> And some in velvet gowns,"

would more aptly describe that march down the hall to the dining-room. Some there were

who had known "velvet gown" and all that it implies, but they were few and they clasped a faded bit of ribbon or carried an indestructible air of gentility with pathetic lack of assurance. Mostly it was "rags and tags," rags and tags of minds and morals and manners, rags and tags of family and social output.

They all sat down together, all kinds and conditions and colours. A law exists in that State to the effect that in no public institutions can negroes be segregated. A sulky-looking "yellow gal" sat opposite me. I was stunned. Though race prejudice has never been a thing with which I have had to contend, this was of course unheard of. My throat tightened. How did they stand it? There was no table-cloth; no napkins, no glasses, only oil-cloth and granite cups with the granite chipped in places so that the rim felt rough and suspicious against one's lips. The food was plentiful and nourishing, but served in gobs and chunks on granite plates. I gagged. But I was hungry, and in spite of myself managed to eat a little. Mrs. Stevens sat across from me; she was an oasis. Her manners were perfect. But the others . . . they tore at their food, shovelled, all but growled over it. I grew hot with memories of my own performances at the sanatorium. There was not much I could say . . . or even think. I supposed wearily that I *was* one with them, one with this motley,

drab group in this room heavy and stagnant with ugliness. If I had hated the sanatorium, what of this? It was too monstrous even to permit of protest. It was a new plane; and could be compared with nothing else. It was here; so was I. Those two facts were like heavy weights upon my mind. I could not rise from beneath them.

For a few days I continued in a state of awareness. The announcement that I was going home, the complete change of environment had proved stimulating for the time being and produced a period of semi-lucidity and a fair amount of calm. There was plenty to keep me mentally occupied. I talked little, watched and listened, and wandered about the ward. A small operating room interested me. I observed the sterilizing of instruments, the care of bandages and the apportioning of medicine with considerable eagerness. The nurses were good about letting me stay around and occasionally gave me a small task to do. As often as not I left it half finished; there was not enough urge to keep me in action very long, at least on any single track.

The progression from this state of semi-cognizance and quiescence was rather gradual but steady; it is hard to trace. People and things counted less and less. I ceased to wonder. I asked a member of my family where I was, and having received an answer,

accepted it. And usually I remembered it, when I was in a state to remember anything objective. The days dragged; there was no "motive," no drive of any kind. A dull acceptance settled upon me. Nothing interested me. I was very tired and heavy. I refused to do most of the things that were asked of me, and to avoid further disturbance I was put to bed again. I was very far from well, physically. The Doctor reported that she rather expected I would not pull through the coming winter. It was hoped that she was right. My condition had been pronounced incurable. There was no use, my family was informed, to make further effort. I would be comfortable in this institution, and would, in all human probability, not remember any of the things that went on or be conscious of my own condition.

This was so stressed that all plans for consulting Eastern specialists were given up. There is really nothing that the layman can do, in his present state of ignorance with regard to psychopathic cases, but accept a statement of this kind. And certainly I seemed very far from being in a condition where constructive effort appeared possible. Reluctantly my family, with the exception of one member, gave up hope. The situation was accepted as one must accept inevitability. Had I indeed been removed from this earth,

I could, I imagine, not have been further from their lives or from any expectancy that my path would ever again cross theirs in active, normal contact.

For a long time I remained dulled, by fever and pain, to even my own inner conflicts. Gradually, however, these began to emerge with sudden intensity. Only a few moments stand out, however, against a general greyness and sense of heat. I was always hot and restless and thirsty.

I remember coming up out of oblivion one day to find myself in a new room, smaller, darker than the first. A metal shutter, slightly perforated, was closed. The light came through in bright pin points, but made very little impression on the general gloom. I was rolled in one of these rough blue blankets and tied down in a straight jacket. They are pleasant garments made of rough canvas, laced down the back ; the sleeves, sewed up at the bottom, are blind alleys, traps for hands to which long strong tapes are attached. These are fastened to the iron supports of a bed. The thing is not so uncomfortable as might be supposed ; it gives quite a free chance for movement back and forth across the bed, though of course no opportunity for turning on one's side. The worst feature, so far as lack of comfort went, was the scratchy feel of the canvas about one's throat, and the fact that frequently the rough

fraying seams came in contact with the sensitive skin under one's finger nails and set teeth on edge, excruciatingly. Between those awful blankets and the straight jacket it is astonishing to me that my teeth ever came *off* edge. When the word hospital is mentioned to this day I seem to have—even before I am conscious of any concept of the word—that exquisitely irritating sense of revolt across my front teeth, running in streams down my whole body so that even muscles contract with shivering protest.

That was my first experience with a straight jacket. How had I been put into it, when? I did not know. I had no memory of being moved to this room, yes . . . a little, a faint recollection of a struggle. I think I bit somebody's hand just as I came through the door. Why? I did not know. As soon as I sensed my condition, I called loudly: "Let me get up; untie these straps." A wisp of a woman with kind eyes and dyed hair put her head in at the doorway: "Unfasten these things." "I can't," she answered in a toneless voice. "I can't. The nurse won't let me." I tugged and pulled. It was no use. For a little while I ceased my efforts. Lying there I came as close, I think, as I ever have to a state of emotion unaccompanied by thought. I simply *felt*. Again, I have never learned words to describe sensations so far removed

from what is called normal. General misery, physical discomfort, degradation not born of intellectual concept, but a deep, bodily and inner mental state; a feeling of being lost, lost utterly with no sense of place or time, no idea as to whom voices belonged, no clear realization of my own identity, lost in mind and body and soul, lost to light and form and colour; a distinct, acid nausea of self-revulsion —all these were in the feeling that swept over me. But they do not describe it any more than a list of ingredients describes any assembled whole. It was all the more complete in that I was not conscious of intellectual activity of any kind. My whole being was given over to feeling. I had not the slightest defence, either within myself or without. The sensation grew, rolled upon me like a gigantic wave. I gasped, struggled; there was a sickening, acute moment, then a welding. The emotion became *me*. I went down with it whence it had come, to some far depth beyond the bounds of any remembering.

Other conscious moments followed, though at this time they were few. I emerged for a second glimpse at the world to find myself in yet another room, not so small, not quite so dark. I was rolled in a blue blanket; two others were over me. Evidently I was being given a "sweat" of some kind. The straight jacket had been removed. First of all, I was

aware of being completely unclad. The blanket was wet against me, and not so "scratchy"; then I realized that the sex drive had me in hand; apparently it had gone on "while I was away." It was certainly in full swing now. It provided occupation, but not for long. I was seized with a sudden restless recoil and found myself in the hall. The sun poured through the barred windows of the parlour; outside the leaves were gold and red, accentuated by a clear late green. It was a moment of relief, like a breath to one who is choking. I gave a free movement with my whole body; the blanket dragged loosely across one shoulder. I caught a scandalized expression on the face of a neat little person in a lavender gown, sewing on a bit of bright cotton. That was all. So far as recollection goes, I never got back to my room, pausing almost in mid-air with a single covering lifted high by a swift, exultant swing of my arm, I went out, like a gutted candle.

I "came to" a third time in a new place. Again I did not recall how I happened to be there, but by some process, a sort of unconscious registering of incident, I knew positively the moment I sensed anything, that I was where I had never been before, and also that I was up very high. This was true. I had been moved to a "worse" ward on the top floor of the building. My bed felt crumply,

as if it had not been smoothed for a long time, the inevitable rough blanket was up against my chin. In another bed was another heap of blanket, with a tousled head barely visible in the dark. "Who are you anyway?" I asked, sitting up suddenly. "What are you doing in my room?" I was very much irritated; it went decidedly against the grain to wake and find a perfect stranger so near. "Who are you?" The heap moved, mumbled something and looked up with big, meek, frightened eyes. "Oh, I know," I said. "It's the little one with dyed hair who came in the day I had the straight jacket on." My irritation subsided; she was so small and so pathetic, like a little street dog summarily robbed of her puppies, who drags about with tail between her legs sniffing for them in odd, dusty corners. It was no use being angry, there was not enough of her to give any feeling its legitimate satisfaction.

I lay back upon my lumpy pillows. Sex, again . . . and at the same time an immediate revolt against it, revolt that made me sick with disgust but would not lift me out. There also crept into my mind the familiar feeling of separation—separation from everything else on earth. I quite forgot the little creature opposite me. I felt every moment as if I were higher and higher. I could never get down, get back; the room opened on to . . . space,

blank, void. I could never get back, never find myself or anything. The room moved a little as if it were gradually slipping into that all-enveloping nothingness. . . . Then the consciousness of sex again reared its head; it made me sicker and sicker, but I could not shake it off. I did very little thinking in the higher sense of the word. It was as if, for the moment, I had slipped back to kinship with a primitive life form, knowing only sex and immediate environment. The one human element was a perfectly definite sense of revulsion, and perhaps suffering almost to a normal level. The revulsion grew. I did not have the energy to endure any strong emotion. For a number of months, under such stress, I simply slipped back into the dark, as some people faint as the result of physical injury.

I have but one other memory of that ward, though I think I was there some weeks. I stood in the doorway of the "porch," but only for a moment. I had been violently resisting all efforts to move me in any direction. This, I think, was very often merely a protest against continuous misery and discomfort. I had no other outlet. I had slipped into the realm of forgetfulness with a fixed determination not to talk, with a distrust and dislike of every one about me. Then, too, I was not able to talk coherently for any length

of time; I was too vague about the causes of my discomfort to make myself understood. If I scratched or bit or kicked, words were not needed. Possibly I had actually reverted to a stage where I used such methods of communication—as does the untutored savage—because they were all I had at my command or were, in any event, the most immediately available.

I was stamping, champing, rearing like an unbroken colt when the Doctor appeared at my side. There was a look of genuine distress and withdrawal on her face. "Is this Jane Hillyer?" she said. She could not have made a wiser remark. The sound of my own name did something to me, recalled not old associations, but their accompanying emotions. I felt somewhere, in some far corner of my being, that which was very different from rage. I dropped my eyes and stood still. Humiliation, complete and dominant, took possession of me. Then I remembered. I was in the presence of those who were not to have any control over me. I lifted my head, shook the hair out of my eyes and walked past her like a royal potentate. It must have been funny.

In one glance I took in the "porch." It was like all the porches, only perhaps a little more bare. Plain wooden benches were ranged along the sides. The floor was concrete, the walls half-way up brick, and above that large

windows opened in, from a very heavy wire netting. The benches were filled with women, at least with what had probably once been women. Now they were drab, grey heaps of flesh, looking out of expressionless faces with blank eyes. Their clothes were all about one colour, reduced to a nondescript neutrality by ruthless washing. One figure held my unwilling attention. She was fat as a wicked oriental idol; her brown skin was mottled; thin grey hair was slicked down like wet sea slime on her low, animal-like brow; obscenities dripped from her sagging, purple lips. I turned suddenly, tore myself loose from the grasp of two nurses, and went straight to my room.

"Jane, don't you want to go out on the porch? The sunlight will be good for you," said the Doctor.

"No."

"But why not? You have been in this room for a long time. Why don't you want to?"

"It's so *ugly*."

In a short time I was returned to the "ward for the sick"; and was kept in bed for a few days or weeks . . . I did not know. One morning I awoke. The sun poured in through the window; walls were light green; bed, woodwork, white. The House Supervisor was in the room. I smiled at her: "Good-morning," she greeted me with unvarying cheerfulness.

"Hello," I answered. "How are you?"

"Quite well," she answered. "And you?"

"I feel corking. I'd like to get up."

"We'll ask the Doctor about that," she said, gave my bed a pat and left me. I had come back, completely. I felt like myself, alert and interested. I held out my hand and let the sun play through my fingers. I noted with interest that the trees were bare; they had been gay with coloured leaves the last time I had seen them. The ground was glittering with early frost. Word was sent to the Doctor that I was "awake" and had asked to get up. She came as quickly as she could. When she entered my room she called me twice. I did not answer. I was "gone away" again. It was a very brief respite but significant in the light of what followed. Out of chaos and struggle and revolt I would suddenly snap back into complete normality . . . for a moment, an hour, later, perhaps for half a day. This time it had been so short that it was only pleasurable; I had not had time to sense my situation, to question or to be filled with longing or regret. Usually I was not so fortunate. There is no confusing moments of awareness with any others. I was *I*, with my own rhythm and capacity for enjoyment or suffering; each quality in its familiar proportion and relationship to every other. That is one of the things insanity does

to the individual: stresses some features of personality, blanks others out so that the patient's feel of himself is new, nagging, disturbing in the extreme. Reactions as old and as expected as life itself fail to register; new ones make themselves felt with a jar that shakes the entire being. One part nicks against another instead of working with it. If an engine trying to progress with brakes on, with no water and too much oil, with some screws tightened and others lacking, with an operator that backs one moment and rushes forward the next—if such an engine should become suddenly conscious, it would know something of the inner feel of madness; and if it should suddenly be repaired and become itself again, there would be no chance for any future confusion on that point. Either your parts are properly assembled or they aren't; and you know it; that is to say you know when you are normal, though it be for the duration of one tick of the clock.

After a time I was allowed to get up; I was better, somewhat. I knew where I was and why. I knew people when I saw them, and could answer any question that was asked about my immediate surroundings, but I was rapidly acquiring fixed delusions of a disturbing and dangerous nature. These were largely of one kind and had to do with my most recent shock. I sat looking out of the window; a visitor

approached. I made a dash for the door, kicked it, beat my head against it, rattled the knob furiously. That person was my mother; she was coming. I had actually seen some one but had mistaken her identity. "Don't you know that your mother is dead?" asked the Doctor very gently. "I thought so, but I *saw* her, just now. I know I *did*; of course I thought she was dead, but I think so many things you say are not true. I must have been mistaken about her death. I *saw* her just *now*. Let me go to her, let me *go*." "But," persisted the Doctor, "won't you believe *me* when I tell you she died ten months ago?" Believe her, believe anyone in this place? I would *not*. Sometimes I sat wearily after an attack of this kind but usually quiescence had little place in these moments.

One cold day I stood again at the window; a bowed figure in a shawl came up the walk, staggering a little with what I thought was weariness—it was probably some lack of motor control. The figure sat down in a swing that had been left out, though it was now early December. The wind blew harshly; there was a flurry of snow.

"It's my mother out there," I whispered to myself. "She's waiting for me. She looks so tired and thin; she is ill and filled with despair; she is disgraced. She has sold everything to get me away from this place;

she has only that old shawl. She's waiting for me!" With a quiet determination I made for the door. A nurse happened to be coming in; it was partly open. A few moments later one nurse held my hands, one my feet, one my knees. The Doctor and another nurse were trying to get me into a straight jacket. I gave them all the exercise they needed for that day. When it was over the Doctor permitted herself the unusual luxury of leaning against the door to rest and catch her breath. Her fresh blouse was torn from shoulder to cuff. I was rapidly earning the reputation that unmistakably belonged to me; I had the dubious distinction of being the most dangerous patient on the women's side of the hospital; there were some hundreds of us. And I am quite sure the motive that drove me to the greatest extremes was always the same: *She* was there; or I heard a friend calling—invariably an actual voice initiated the delusions—my family were in need of me; they were just outside that door!

When the Doctor and nurses left me I fought and struggled, called and stormed until every ounce of strength, physical and mental, was exhausted. Then only would I remain quiet. Let my strength return and the battle was renewed. Sometimes this kept up for days until I was so worn out that I forgot the cause of my anguish, and fell into a state of weary

indifference. The straight jacket was removed. It was all the same to me, on or off, in bed or out; what did I care for anything? At these times, I lay on a couch most of the day. All I asked was to be alone.

"No, I don't like to braid rag rugs."

"Yes, I would rather do nothing."

"No, I don't want to go walking."

"But the fresh air would be good for you," the Doctor would persist. She won out. Protesting a little I went for a walk with the nurses, and back again to my couch. One reason I disliked going out was that "it might do me good." I didn't want it to; I didn't want to get "better." It was in this state that the profound distaste for life, which had hurled me pretty well out of it, began to assume larger, more definite and set proportions. During these periods I ate very little; not that I had any idea of starving myself: I simply wanted to keep my hold on existence a slight one. "Next time I try, it ought not to be so hard, if I keep my resistance down," was the tenor of my reasoning.

One morning the Doctor came into my room just in time to loosen a cleverly made noose. I had fastened it to the top of the bed with real skill and I had apparently done it with no consciousness. The urge to "get away" had worked, perhaps, as had the sex urge, without my being present. I have no memory of this,

which is significant in that it is the *one incident* I have never been able to recall. It has always interested me; I had never been able to see before how one could seek for release in any way that involved great pain. In this instance I must have been cruelly uncomfortable, but somehow completely anæsthetized by the imperfect functioning of my brain.

After this I was in bed again for a long time, unaware of surroundings. Gradually the dull half light returned. I got up. My mental processes were far from keen. I talked a little, rested much, gathered energy for another point of hyper-activity. I woke one morning early, hearing sounds in the next room, voices of the "men doctors," and the gentle roll of rubber-tyred wheels as a stretcher was pushed down the hall; a patient was being "transferred" to another ward. I listened. A door shut. There was something about the finality of the sound which set me off.

I was perfectly certain that my mother was on that stretcher; she had been in the room next to me all night. I had not known it; and now they had taken her away. I could not get at her; she was gone. I screamed. The Doctor was at my side in a moment. She made an attempt to reason with me; obviously there was nothing to reason with. I cried for release, to be allowed to follow, and beat my head against the wall. The Doctor made

a whispered remark about the "tragedienne of Ward 7" which I overheard and resented keenly. The whole thing was all too real to me, though to the onlooker it must have been absurdly exaggerated. I was tied down again.

I think I was "in restraint" for a long time after this. It began to worry the Doctor. She came into my room one morning with the idea of releasing me if possible. I remember being put upon my feet; some one was beginning to unlace. I kicked and bit. I was infuriated; there was nothing in the whole situation that did not serve as an incentive to blind rage. It was so hideously ugly; I was so hot and uncomfortable; I hated all those people; I loathed being touched by them. I fought against my own freedom like a singed bobcat. "Is this Jane Hillyer?" asked the Doctor standing off and looking at me. Again my own name had a magical effect. I had one of those curious experiences in which one sees oneself. I saw what she saw.

A human being had turned beast; its hair was in a mat over its eyes; its face twisted and marred by rage and pain; the upper part of its body was incased in stiff canvas from which a wrecked negligee hung in limp, faded folds. "Is this Jane Hillyer?" she repeated. I made a swift turn and threw myself face downward upon my bed. Yes, this *thing* was "me," the *thing* that had brought me to my

feet in the middle of the night months before with its sinister prophecy, had indeed ceased to haunt, and had become incarnate; it had made its spring and landed full and square. "Yes," I answered, "yes, *this* is 'me.'"

I was stilled now. They freed me and moved me to another room, lighter and a little fresher. I lay in bed hardly alive, waking only for food, responding only slightly to questions or suggestions. I was conscious and yet so weak that everything was dimmed. Within me was just unhappiness that seemed to have settled with complete permanency. I wondered a little what "happy" was like; I could not remember.

Existence went on in about that rhythm; storm, complete quiescence, gradual gathering of force, always accompanied by an increasing irritation, and then typhoon. There was not much regularity about the duration of any one state, I think. Sometimes violence lasted a long time, sometimes calm, sometimes the intermediate stage of gadfly restlessness. During the periods of semi-quiet and realization I was still pursued by the overwhelming sense of guilt which had seized me in the sanatorium. I still felt sure that in a hundred yard dash for absolute villainy I would leave the "Hun" and all he implied far behind. This, and the delusion concerning my mother, were the controlling centres of mental activity at that time.

There was growing up, however, a very troublesome difficulty which had to do with mistaken identity; people looked like other people. I would get an idea that X was Y; usually there was some basis of resemblance, and nothing could persuade me of the contrary. This had its basis in my loneliness, I think. I simply could not quite sense the fact, however well I knew it, that I was cut off from all my friends, from every one I had ever cared for or been interested in. That man coming up the walk, in reality a patient, was Doctor Carter; maybe he was coming to see how I was or to take me home; that woman was Mrs. Richardson who had come all the way from California. Often it was not as definite as this. I simply saw my friends; they were about me as they always had been; I did not rationalize as to how they managed to make their appearance, or wonder just what they were doing in an insane asylum. Only part of my mind functioned at a time. If I was thinking about the hospital I could not often hold an individual in mind, and *vice versa*.

On the other hand, there were weeks when I spent my days in cold fear that some of my friends might come. I did not want to see them here. I feared the effort of contact. What would they think about the scratch on the nurse's hand, the gash in the door I had made with my heel last Thursday? What

would they think of these new people about me? Would I have to introduce them? What would we talk about? Mostly I was worried about the inner adjustment. If they were right with me, these friends of mine, could I find them, sense them? I doubted it, sadly. Yet . . . what would I not have given for one moment, however brief, of the old unrestrained companionship. I used almost to pray that some day I would again laugh with some one over a joke, the kind of joke that bubbles up out of gay, wholesome, daily touch. Laugh . . . it was months, and months since I had heard that sound. Would I *ever* hear it again?

2

"And she asked me if, when I grew up, I wanted to be a devil or an angel; she said I would be one or the other. I decided to be an angel." I came to the surface repeating these words. They were words spoken by a school teacher to a very intimate friend of mine when she was a little girl; they had somehow stuck by her and now they recurred to me, in what possible connection, I do not know. "Well," I thought, "I have decided to be a devil." It did rather look that way. I was tied down again. A nurse entered and unfastened the straps at the sides of the bed, and taking them in her hand she drove me,

gently enough, but drove me, none the less, like a pack animal out in the hall, and put me in a big rocking chair and covered me with a blanket. The hall was punctuated by rocking chairs creaking in front of every door. I was the only rocking-chair inhabitant who had the doubtful honour of wearing " the little coatee," as I wrathily called my straight jacket, sometimes.

In front of every chair was a basket or box, gaily decorated with red or green paper. The chandeliers were also decorated with red; red tissue paper bells swung from beneath the arches; green was festooned over the windows. It was late evening, the ward was softly lighted, the figures in the chairs were silent. I was again puzzled. I had come up out of nothing into what? Who were they? I was not worried, though. I remembered I was going to be a devil and that comforted me. If I were a devil I would not have to care about anything. The Doctor came into the ward. She leaned over me. " Good evening . . ." she said, " Do you know it's Christmas Eve? " The words stirred something deep within me; but I hardened at once. Instantly I looked up into her face. " It's a hell of a Christmas Eve," I said with explosive energy.

They led me back to my room; I was weak and trembling with fatigue; the brief period of perception had been too much. A slight

stimulant was administered. "I thought she was going to faint," whispered the nurse. "She is very white," answered the Doctor, tucking me in with her firm capable hands. I moved my head restlessly on the pillow, then closed my eyes in profound weariness. "I'm not a very successful devil," I thought with a twinge of self-reproach. I "went under" again. It was a blessed Christmas Eve, quiet and without further remembrance. The New Year had mercifully lost its first newness before anything stirred within me, or came to disturb my peace. I had a long rest.

When I did reach consciousness it was only dimly, as one knows that he is probably dreaming, yet continues to dream. I lay in my bed, tied down. I was oppressed by the fact of imprisonment, and the impossibility of movement. This took form in an hallucination. People that I was fond of passed me in the hall, they moved in a swift procession, on and on; I lifted my head but could not glimpse them; they went faster and faster. I alone seemed without the power of rapid motion. They seemed to rise higher, or I, to sink; I was in a pit, dark and hideous. They kept on coming; they called my name. "Wait," I replied, "wait till I get these tapes unfastened." "Oh, no," they answered in busy, happy voices, "no, Jane, we cannot wait. We have to go."

I did not try to struggle ; I was too hopeless. I only lay and endured until I should become blank. Weeks later I awoke. Red sunset light flooded my room ; the black bars of the window were sinister against it. On the porch the patients were having supper. I could hear the clack of forks on tin plates. Some one handed me a plate. I looked at it in supreme disgust. I can remember yet the exact shape of a roll and the somewhat acid odour of stewed apricots. " But there's no napkin," I objected. " You don't use them," came the reply. " Then how do you expect me to eat ? " " Food was made before napkins," laughed one of the patients as a glass was put down beside me. I knocked my plate across the room with my knee and refused all food. " They have been feeding me like a chained tiger in a cage," I thought. " Well, they can't any more." I looked at the room. The floor was rough and dark, the walls were dark. I did not even have a spread on my bed. I grew rigid with loathing. It was so ugly, so ugly. How could anything on this green earth be so hideous ! A sudden movement threw a stiff, unkempt lock of my hair across my face. My hands being tied I could not brush it away ; it tickled and made my eyes itch. I realized that I had never been so uncomfortable in all my life. The sheet was under me in knots ; one foot was bare and cold

where the blanket had come untucked. Rough folds of hospital cotton were pressed against my flesh by the heavy canvas. I was awake late into the night, discomfort mounting to the pitch of misery. When at last I went to sleep, I was repeating to myself, " I want cool sheets, and no straight jacket and a silk night gown . . . a silk night gown, that's all I want."

I was in the sick ward only a few weeks after I got up this time. Possibly the long stay in bed had benefited me somewhat physically, but I was still much confused as to mental operations. My condition was, however, taking on a somewhat chronic cast. The periods of semi-quiet were longer, violence less frequent and of briefer duration.

It was early spring, the air was warming, the trees beginning to show faint bud swellings. This added to one's sense of imprisonment, and to the ugliness of a hospital ward. The world was becoming lovely enough so that the dullest eyes responded. One evening, I was sitting with my head pressed against the window-pane, watching the outlines of branch traceries grow dim in the early twilight. A star or so was nestling in the interlacing twigs. I had quite forgotten my whereabouts, till some sound recalled me. I looked up. A procession of nude women were walking down the hall to be put to bed in the " dormitory." A nurse or two followed them. I was not

shocked. All possibility of shock had been removed ; I had had all I could take in the last months. I did not even wonder at those tragic figures, bent and huddled, too confused to protect themselves from the cold blast of exposure. There was not a lovely line in the whole group, not a redeeming hint of beauty. They were all old and shrunken, with sagging flesh and knotted muscles like Rodin's infinitely pathetic and ironic " La Pucelle."

The why of this procession was apparent. It was easier for the nurses to handle the patients in herds. I looked out of the windows again. The pattern of the branches was dim and grey ; the stars were bright, one yellow, one blue. How *could* the world lend itself to such sordidness as that hall contained ? I heard some one gasp. The Doctor was standing beside me, also looking down the ward. She had been in the hospital only about as long as I had, and had apparently never chanced on the ward before just at this hour—though she went through it three times every day. I was a little astonished at the shock on her face, a little envious. There were some things to which she could object ; I had objected all I could and was pretty well dead to horror.

One of the nurses cried herself to sleep that night. A patient reported that they had all received a " terrible strict lecture." There

were no more of these processions. But that they had ever occurred seems incredible. Couldn't even young nurses realize that fragments of people are not necessarily animals? Apparently most of these girls comprehend very little.

The next day I was transferred to Ward No. 13, a ward for those considered incurable. Its reputation was that of a "bad" ward and its location in the very back of the building. I was better physically, and had received my permanent mental classification, hence the change. Ward 13 was smaller than the "sick" ward. It had no "parlour," only the long hall, a dining-room, and off that the porch. At one end of the hall near the door was a V-shaped window seat; here I took up my abode; here I rested during the day, read a little, received the one member of my family who came to see me regularly; here I was interviewed by the Doctor, and here whenever I could manage it I dined. A kind of stupor settled upon me like a fog, and while there were no longer lengthy periods of complete oblivion yet most of the time I sensed things dimly. The stupor arose, I think, very largely from physical exhaustion; I lay for days and hours more dead than alive, wanting only to be undisturbed.

I resented suggestions of activity of any kind, particularly having to "go for a walk."

And no wonder! The "Ladies" were lined up like a prison gang, a nurse in front and one in back, and perhaps an extra nurse who kept her eyes open for any signs of unruly behaviour. Somehow the patients looked worse outdoors than in, wrapped in old shawls, faded sweaters, jackets and coats of a previous generation. In the bright sunlight they seemed, somehow, more dead. I knew myself one of them, and it burned deeply. There were no fair Ophelias in that straggling line; insanity and beauty do not go together, at least, as I saw it. No one liked those walks. We were kept out a stated length of time, about half an hour, and no doubt the exercise was good for us, but in my case, at least, it took many hours before I ceased to tingle with resentment and humiliation after one of these excursions. "It's bad enough to be here," I would whisper, "without having to take part in a circus procession." After the first time there was nothing to see, plain red brick buildings, plain cement sidewalks, plain everything! It was the essence of dullness and institutionalism.

Yet in some ways life became more endurable. I loved the view from my window seat—a grove of splendid old trees, beyond that a little hill where the low picturesque cottage for the tuberculous hid itself behind vines and bushes. In the evening, when the lights were on, the cottage seemed like a "house, a real

house where people lived." It might have sheltered children, and maybe a dog or a cat, or even a little baby. It gave me a feeling of anchorage, somehow, that small white building. It is well that I knew as little as possible about the true state of its inmates, poor helpless beings struggling against the double burden of derangement and disease, white-faced, drawn; some, as I afterwards came to know, hardly more than living corpses.

Not long after my transfer to Ward No. 13, my feeling of distrust and suspicion began to modify, gradually. In talking with the Doctor I found she always answered me with utmost accuracy; I never discovered even the slightest lapse, such as may occur because of haste or carelessness. I found I could count on her, as I could count on the return of light in the morning. The fact that her visits to the ward came at a regular time was also reassuring; out of all the confusion and uncertainty one thing at least was fixed. I finally decided that she could have had no part in the lie that wrought such havoc, and deduced correctly that it was "only a story the nurses at the sanatorium told in order to get rid of me easily." This decision brought about a very real change. I began to talk a little to the Doctor, to answer questions with some civility, even to volunteer information now and then. I began to look forward to her coming and to

warm delightfully when she sat down beside me to chat a bit. But I did not like the nurses on this ward as well as I had one or two of those on the sick-ward. On the whole, however, my experience with nurses was fairly satisfactory, considering the hours they have to be on duty, the trying service that is required, the small pay, and the quality of individual who will accept such conditions. I met with much genuine kindliness, little or no real intelligence and understanding, in two instances, only, anything that approached brutality.

One of these occurred early one morning. I had risen out of sorts. I went on the porch with my tray. I had managed things by this time so that I did not have to eat in the dining-room. I demanded a tray to take where I pleased, and somehow got it ; even the patients waited upon me, grumbling about my superior manners a little, but still willing to help me. I have no idea why, unless it was that I may have looked so utterly sick and abject during meals. The nurse handed me a granite cup filled with coffee, and some oatmeal. The food looked worse than usual to me ; everything did. It was a cold, damp, yellow-grey day outside ; the trees dripped ; pools of mud and slush were everywhere. The ward was even more drab than the outside. I picked up my cup and coolly heaved it at the nurse by way of expressing my displeasure. It barely

missed her. She picked up the same cup and failed to miss me. A trickle of blood ran down from the top of my head into one eye. The nurse was pretty well frightened, swabbed the cut and laced me into a straight jacket. I did not resist the latter, knowing I deserved it. She tied me to a bench where I waited for the Doctor.

"Jane, you don't even give a twinge when I put in these stitches," she said as she skilfully sewed up the gash.

"What does she think I am, a baby," I asked myself. To her I said, "It doesn't hurt." In fact I rather liked it. There was something clean and definite about that slight pain, so much more desirable than the dull confusion *inside* my head. And it gave me something to think about. Long before the bandage was taken off, the nurse had received her discharge and was on her way home. The Doctor watched me with great care.

The second experience was much more distressing. A new nurse came on the ward, a tall, splendid-looking child, with no interest in her work, and no qualification unless physical strength might be so considered. She pushed one about in a very trying fashion.

My one visitor was sitting opposite me "on the lawn." "Miss Willis is a man, I think," I announced suddenly.

"Why do you think Miss Willis is a man?"

"Because she is so tall and strong. I'm pretty strong, but she handles me as if I were a straw. Some of the patients are afraid of her."

Miss Willis overheard the conversation and evidently did not find it pleasing. She took my arm and led me into the house, letting the others come as they would, nor did she release her hold until she had escorted me to the "back hall opposite the clothes room." There she landed me flat on my back and put her knee on my chest. She took my head in her strong young hands and knocked it against the floor. "You darn fool," she said, "what do you mean by saying I am a man? You idiot, you haven't the sense you were born with." She used my head to accentuate her periods, banging it hard. "Will you ever tell her again that I am rough, will you?" "Will you ever tell her or anyone that the patients are afraid of me . . . I'll see that you don't." I did not reply, though the back of my head was very sensitive and ached cruelly. She shut off my wind supply a little. "Now you will behave?" she threatened. After quite a long time I gasped out that I would. She left me.

For an hour, perhaps, I lay on my face. I had not given in because I was afraid, but because the whole thing was too utterly degrading. I had never had the slightest contact

with violent physical force before. Even the inoffensive "slipper" hadn't come my way. "Spanking may be necessary for poor mothers who have no time to give to their children, but it will not do for women of leisure," was my mother's dictum. I had looked upon any kind of corporal discipline as simple barbarism, not for our world. "It had come to this," I thought. "How can they let it happen to me; how can they? How could she go away and leave me here? She's home now and they are having supper with blue dishes and flowers and it's fun; they're laughing. How *could* she leave me? But of course she didn't guess; she can't imagine what it's like. She doesn't know anything about it." I realized it would be useless to attempt an explanation. And I was too tired to try and too proud. No one should know that I had been in a brawl! I didn't even want her to have such things in her mind. It was enough if one of us did. I dragged myself to my bed and was lying there when the Doctor came through. This was unusual.

"Aren't you feeling well?" she asked.

"I'm tired," I answered.

"Weren't you glad to have a caller?"

"Yes, but I want to go home. Please, when can I? I will be so careful. I want to go so very *badly*."

The Doctor looked down at me kindly and

felt my pulse. It was racing. This was one of the few times when she administered a sleeping potion. I always wondered if she quite knew the wisdom of her act ; for she had certainly received no enlightenment from Miss Willis. I slept late the next morning, and when I awoke, though my head ached only slightly, I felt " bruised inside," hurt and as if " my mind were bleeding." I was still and listless for days, not even alive enough to be relieved when, for some reason, Miss Willis disappeared from the hospital.

3

The next months were not so marked by outer revolt, but the same rhythm continued on a more subjective plane—intense depression, and hyper-emotionalism ; a wearying and quieting, then lethargy. I learned to recognize the different stages clearly. I hated, most, the times when I began to gather energy ; I knew that the suffering to follow would be unbearably keen. I held back as long as I could but the wave of misery inevitably overtook me. " Shall I always have to stay here, shall I grow old like these women ? Is this all I am ever going to know of the world ? Won't I ever learn anything more ? I shall forget the little I have been taught. I can't stand being alone always, with just these queer strangers about

me . . . I can't stand it. *I can't.*" But there it was, closed doors, bars, thick walls—no possible escape.

I remembered how I could never be persuaded to go to a circus ; it was because of the trained animals. The one time I did go, I stood for a long while in front of a lion's cage. He was a great, beautiful, tawny fellow, splendid and lithe. His keeper said that he had not long been in captivity. I was sickened by his restless pacing back and forth, back and forth, in that puny box. He looked as though the whole jungle would be none too wide. His hunting, haunting eyes followed me. I could not be consoled by popcorn, a ride on a pony, or even by "pink lemonade." "Well, now, I know how he felt ; now I know exactly." I paced back and forth, back and forth down the hall. "For goodness' sake, *sit down* ; you will drive me wild," called the nurse. I sat. "Maybe she doesn't like to look at caged beasts, either," I thought.

One morning I did manage to get loose. I do not remember how, but I must have watched my chance and slipped out when the laundry was brought in or a nurse had her head turned for a second. I could be very quick and cat-like in my movements. I walked for quite a long distance. It was the first time I had been out on the street for considerably over a year. Everything looked strange and far away.

But I was glad to be alone, glad to have a chance to move freely. The muscles in my back responded joyously to my speed; I went rather swiftly. One thing particularly stands out—a charming little brown shingle house, covered just then with late red roses. A baby on the porch waved a fat pink hand as I passed and gurgled at me " just as if I were some one," I thought gratefully.

I was free and probably I could get home. I felt in my sweater pocket; I had just about enough change for car fare. " I'd look sweet, though, going through town in this blue gingham dress and no hat, and yet . . . home." No, it was impossible; I could not go. They could not have me. It might frighten little Jane and Tip. They ought not to be subjected to any disturbance. How would I have felt, after my father left home, if he had suddenly appeared? I should have been confused and terrified. No, I could not go home.

Sadly, I turned back. I walked up in front of the hospital. " The grounds are lovely here," I thought. The gardens were a riot of fall colour. I did not remember having seen this part of the building. " And how big it is!" I sat down in a swing. The Doctor came and sat beside me.

" Where have you been?"

" Out for a walk."

" Did you enjoy it?"

"Very much. I should like to go again. That's a pretty little brown house up there with the roses, isn't it?"

"Did you go *that* far?" she asked, somewhat aghast. Then, turning to a nurse she said: "Have you your keys?" The nurse nodded. I wondered at the set, determined expression on her face. I realized that the conversation was ended; the Doctor was busy and I must not detain her. I rose and together we made our way back to the ward. The Doctor was plainly puzzled: "Why hadn't I tried to go home? Why had I come in so quietly?" A mere mention of home was enough sometimes to send me off into a fury, and often resulted in a straight jacket. Here I was sitting quietly beside her on the window seat of Ward No. 13.

I had, for the moment, snapped back into a state which pretty well approached normal. When the Doctor left, I leaned against the window-pane and looked out longingly. It had been very nice. Why couldn't I go again? It had certainly been good for me, whatever the dangers incurred. If I could have been given solitude and fresh air and a sense of freedom much might have been accomplished. But this was impossible in a public institution, and would have been difficult to manage anywhere.

That afternoon when my visitor came, she

found me more alert and bright-eyed than I had been for months. I ran to meet her.

"I hear you had a walk this morning."

"Yes, and it was fun, but I met a little newsboy and I took a paper and forgot to pay him. Wasn't that thoughtless? He comes around here at night. Will you give some money to Miss West for me? He's little, not much bigger than Tip, and his load is heavy. I guess he wants his pennies. Tip would."

She smiled and promised. We talked about friends and about books mostly. I could not settle down to reading, but I liked to hear of recent volumes. I have been told that I always received her quietly, as if I were in my own house and she had come to see me there. Only once, when another member of my family came from out of town, did I make any effort to follow. She always stayed until she saw the strain was getting too great. I almost died with longing. Just before I snapped, she left. The door closed behind her. When she was miles away, was she as far from me as when we sat together? Still, I could stand it if I did not have to see her come and go through *bars*! I hid my face in my hands.

One other guest came to see me, making a trip from another city. "Tell me," I said, "about Stravinsky." I had read of his most recent Paris sensation. She had recently returned from abroad. I listened breathlessly

to her account. We, also, talked of other friends, of the work that I had done and had hoped to do. She told me afterwards that the only thing that made me seem any different from usual was the fact that I looked so shockingly ill, and one remark I made to the effect that I had met an acquaintance the day before, whom I could not possibly have seen. The fact of mistaken identity, alone, betrayed me.

Yet the next day I narrowly escaped being "tied" as the result of some outbreak, probably the result of a sudden nervous irritation. I could hang on to the tiller and steer fairly well for short periods, but I was utterly unable to maintain an "even keel" for any length of time. A storm was liable to sweep over the decks at any moment and all but submerge any semblance of normality.

The main drives at this time were an overwhelming desire to "get away," the sex drive not so dominant now, and the delusion concerning my mother. I sat at the window. She was outside; I made every effort to reach her. Doors, walls, bars, nurses, were not to be considered as obstacles. When I was outside I was *sure* she was within. I got fleeting tantalizing glimpses of her as she went around corners, through doorways. On the other hand, in more lucid moments, I refused to think of her at all. "She does not belong to

this place ; it is better that I do not call her even by so much as a thought."

My efforts to get away were of two kinds, as they had been in the sanatorium. I tried open revolt, but not too often. It did not work very well, and the result was so humiliating that I was apt to remember it even in my most desperate moments. I also tried implicit obedience to every suggestion. This was a great strain as the suggestions often seemed foolish to me. " Why should anyone suppose I want to sew rag rugs ? " I thought to myself. " Why should anyone think I want to go to chapel ? " Advice was nearly always distasteful. As a result of these conflicting attitudes, my behaviour fell somewhere in between the two. I grew less and less " destructive," but amiability was never my most outstanding characteristic while on Ward No. 13.

The second summer dragged on ; fall came. I seemed no nearer home than I had been two years before. I questioned my visitor :

" But what can I do to get home ? "

" Only get well, dear."

" How ? "

" By resting and doing what the Doctor wants you to."

" What do they say is wrong ? What do they call it ? "

She gave me a fine long-sounding name. " What does that mean ? What is wrong

inside my head?" She conveyed some idea to me. "But I should think if cell tissues were deteriorated that would be the end of you. It would indicate a kind of dissolution, wouldn't it? How can I *ever* expect to get well? Does anyone recover from this thing?"

"The Doctor says that some do." There were unshed tears in her eyes. I knew that she had very little hope and she knew that I knew it. I looked up at her and smiled; she had dealt frankly and honestly with me. I was grateful.

Closer and closer came despair. It had a silencing effect. I struggled less. Almost, I think, I cultivated it. Hope vibrates, grows greater, grows smaller; energy and vitality feed its flames. But despair asks nothing, save complete acceptance. The way to that acceptance is through struggle and rebellion, because, I suppose, despair is not a natural state. If any large portion of the population of a given country lived despairingly completely for any length of time, progress would be dead, obviously, and invention but a forgotten dream. There is no motive, no push of any kind, behind those living in complete despair. Yet despair is in itself kind, if only it be whole-souled. Pain comes when hope appears ever so dimly at its edges.

When despairing I made no effort to go home. delusions died down. I had lost all, why grasp

for that which had no existence ? Inner drives lessened because they had in them the element of futurity. The future is nothing to those who despair, nor is the present. Yet I did whatever little daily things there were to do, willingly enough. Why resist ? They held no interest for me one way or the other and were certainly not worth arguing about. Then, too, resistance possesses the factor of hope ; hope hurt. I avoided it all I could.

Under the quieting influence of this attitude my behaviour became more human. The same wave-like rhythm continued, up and down, but it showed itself less in my conduct. It had to do now with these two elements, hope and despair. On the way up to hope I grew restless, irritable, at times uncontrollable ; once arrived for an hour or so I occasionally gained a kind of illusionary contentment. On the way back to despair, I grew calm, less sensitive to stimuli ; arrived, I was apt to be very quiet. I think the latter condition is called " sulks," but it was not really that ; I did sulk but only when hope backed me in wanting something, which I failed to attain.

One moment of emerging from the pleasant tenor of despair stands out very clearly. Nurses were in a holiday mood, patients were dressed in their best. It was Thanksgiving day ; there was a stir of anticipation. Baskets of fruit and flowers added colour to the ward. A sudden

wave of homesickness swept hopelessness away as though it could never establish itself again. I ached and writhed with nostalgia; it was physical, mental, emotional. I hurt from head to foot with longing. The Doctor came "on the hall." "Let me go," I pleaded, "let me go just for an hour or so; I will be very careful. I will come back without questioning. Let me go. It is Thanksgiving day, and they're all at home together."

She was very kind but made it clear to me that my request could under no circumstances be granted. "Oh, do take me off this ward, then," I continued. "Take me anywhere. I have been here *so long*." She went with me into the "clothes room," and we gathered together my things. "I will take you back to Ward No. 5"—the sick ward—she said. "Miss Allison is there, you liked her." We had barely crossed the threshold into Ward No. 5 when I began to tremble from head to foot as if with a sudden ague. The unfamiliar aspect of the ward made it all too vivid. A patient looked up at me with uncontrolled curiosity. I recoiled from the blatant glance. "Take me back," I gasped. "Please take me back; I . . . I don't like this . . . I can't stay here." We turned and went again to Ward No. 13. I sank down on my window seat, cold with exhaustion. I was quite unable to stand any change of environment, any kind of sharp

stimulus. My supply of nerve force must have been pitiably low, just then. I was shivering. The Doctor wrapped my coat around me and left me sadly. She went out to dinner, but she told me afterwards it was pretty well ruined for her by the look I cast upon her as she left the ward, and by the sound of my voice as I pleaded to "go home."

When she returned that evening I was still on the window seat, curled into a ball under my coat. I was quiet and fairly content. Slowly, gently, despair had returned. I wanted nothing; I asked for nothing. I was relaxed a little, almost resting. The Doctor looked down at me with a relieved expression on her face. I had weathered the day well. She had feared wild grief or even violence.

When Christmas came I was again very unhappy. This time I did not ask to go. I was acquiring a sort of self-judgment, and I knew my adjustment to life was too faulty to permit of any change. I was mute with misery. I said little; answered questions when they were asked me; but mostly sat looking with pain-filled eyes at the somewhat futile preparations for the holidays. Many of the patients took part in them, strung popcorn, or made chains of red berries. I wondered how they could.

Late Christmas afternoon my ever faithful guest brought a dainty basket filled with gifts.

The delicate wrappings, bits of carefully selected ribbon looked strangely out of place. There was a picture of my mother, exquisitely enlarged. "See," said my visitor, "see how lovely she is." I looked once, slowly put the lid on the box and tied it carefully. "Will you please thank them for it," I said. "You may have it in your room; it will add so much," said the Doctor. I shook my head. "Don't you want it there?" "I think I will put it with my things in the clothes room," I answered. "Don't they know I can't stand having it here," I thought.

When they went, I sat looking out of the window. The lights in the little white cottage came on, one by one; it was snowing and the cedar trees looked black against the fluffy ground. I felt colder than the snow, colder than the little wind that played with the dry, powdery drifts. Sadness, if left to itself very long, becomes cold and stultifying. I was remote and surrounded with the ice walls of my stilled rages. I was conscious of little beside the permeating sense of sorrow, sorrow that seemed to have been mine always. And then I looked down at my dark dress, and the bright scarf thrown across my shoulders, at the heap of tinsel and gifts beside me. I was conscious of personal dignity again, fleeting, scarred and permanently damaged, but present for the moment and giving a definite, human

" feel " to that half hour. It was the best of Christmas gifts.

4

Somehow the winter dragged to its end, and in March one wet day, word came that I was to be transferred to Cottage B. " That's where you go home from," the patients told me. My belongings were gathered together in a large clothes basket. A nurse took one end ; I took the other and we made a somewhat informal entry at Cottage B. The first thing that struck me was that it looked more " like a house." Two large living-rooms were furnished in more modern fashion than the " parlours " in the " big building." A long hall with little niches for visitors connected these two living-rooms, and the dining-room opened off this. It had a number of round tables. There were table cloths I noted joyously and " real " dishes. The next thing that occupied my attention was that everybody seemed busy ; some were sewing ; some playing cards. In a corner by a window one woman was reading and actually taking notes. It had been so long since I had seen anyone doing normal, usual tasks that it seemed strange. I sat down in the hall with one eye on the door. I had not been on a ground level recently and that too gave me a sense of normality. I could watch the cars pass and people hurrying

to and fro on various errands. I maintained my station at the door all day. That evening when the Doctor came in she asked me about it. "Why do you sit here all the time? Why don't you come in and get acquainted?" "I like to look out," was my answer. I did not try to formulate the truth. I was waiting, waiting for "them." Was not Cottage B "where you go home from"?

Later it was inevitably borne in upon me that while Cottage B was a place for those who were "better," yet one might well remain there for a very long period. I was disappointed but not cruelly so. I had got fairly used to disappointments by that time. Gradually I began to find my place. I took no part in activities. I mostly lay on a couch or sat listlessly, but I paid attention to all that went on about me and sorted out the patients a bit. Here again were all kinds, but there was a larger proportion of education and refinement in this cottage than in the wards; and, as anywhere, the groups divided very largely on this basis. I was amused after each meal to hear the nurses call, "The Laundry Ladies, the Laundry Ladies, time to go to the laundry." The "Laundry Ladies" reminded me of a time when a maid announced to my mother that the "rag-collecting gentleman" wanted to speak to her. "The Laundry Ladies" were most of them women who had been more or

less used to working with their hands and who needed the steadying effect that manual occupation gives.

The other inmates helped about the cottage a little, made beds or washed dishes, though this was not compulsory; a few seemed busy with their own affairs, sewing and reading. Unfortunately I am not in the least hand-minded. At first I did nothing, absolutely. That worried me only slightly; I was pretty content to be quiet because I was, still, far from strong physically. Yet with a little intelligent help, a little guidance from some one trained in occupational therapy I think I might have been given something to be interested in which would have been immensely beneficial. This was true of almost every person in that cottage. Occupational therapy is the crying need. I was urged to sew a little but did not respond. I have never done much sewing; my eyes were in bad condition and I had broken my glasses. Then too what was the use? Why sew in this place? What for? The thing that might have captured my attention would have had to be interesting *in itself*; I had no general drive to depend upon.

Basket weaving with bright colours, craft work in wood or clay, toy-making would undoubtedly have given me "something to get up for in the morning." As it was, I got up because I was not ill enough to stay in bed.

I went downstairs and faced a perfectly blank day with nothing but my own wearying thoughts to fill in the hours. But on the whole things went pretty well. I was tractable and willing enough to respond to direction, but I had absolutely no initiative. Told to sit, I sat, nor did I move until that suggestion was given. I even went on those hated walks with a fair degree of submission, and I quite liked to go out on the lawn with "the ladies." We no longer had to sit in stiff groups but could move about within a limited radius. I could sit alone under a tree and look up through its leaves, watching the play of colour, high-yellow-greens, low-blue-greens, all dipped in the gold of a late afternoon sun. Though I was constantly watched, I was not disturbed. In moments of this kind recovery began to go forward, but how slowly!

I was still subject to delusions but there were not so many now. I had succeeded in suppressing almost all thought of my mother; the sex drive had quite gone. My main difficulty was the confusion of identity. This increased as I began to assume slightly more complex relations with people. It got very troublesome to me and to the nurses and to those on whom I centred my attention. One woman, I was sure at intervals, was my mother's oldest friend, whom we had always known as Aunt Margaret Weston. The woman

was a person of great refinement and highly-specialized education. She had been, before her marriage, an archaeologist by profession, and even now spoke remnants of five languages. Later I learned some rudiments of Greek from her. She was very kind to me from the beginning. She came up to speak to me the first evening. Her manner was gracious, her words well chosen; her voice low and full; small wonder she made an impression upon me. Save for brief intervals she was fairly sane if kept in a limiting environment. Again and again she had gone home, but returned tragically confused and baffled in an attempt to meet life "on the outside." She was pitiably aware of her condition, though not hopeless. She looked forward, as did all the others, to that bright day when she might "go home."

When Mrs. Ellis was out of sight I was wild with restlessness. She had a "privilege" and could go and come; I could not. I was sure that I was going to lose *her*, too. My distress was partly due to the intermittent delusion in regard to her identity and partly due to the fact that she was the one person who gave me anything like a normal or enjoyable contact. "She is like real people," I told my guest. I myself was so far removed from sanity that her eccentricities did not bother me. I took her quite seriously. Fortunately for me her deviations from the normal were of such a

nature as to be quite harmless and she had a great deal of intelligence, of an uneven nature, still at her command. She liked lovely things. We were mutually starved for them. This, alone, was a uniting bond.

She urged me to play for her. I could never be persuaded to do it. In the first place the piano was not mine, and music was too full of associations for me. I could not bear it. When one of the inmates, who really played very well, sat down at the piano, I stole away as quickly as I could to the other end of the cottage and, if possible, put myself behind a shut door. More than once the nurses found me in the " clothes room " with my head buried in my heavy coat. I could not be persuaded to leave until all was quiet again. The rasping of a cheap victrola was little less than acute torture. I used to grow inwardly irate about that, and managed, I suppose, to spoil other people's pleasure very thoroughly. " Do you think you're the only person in this cottage ? " some one would say in just exasperation. " Who *do* you think you are, anyway ? " We did not make life any too easy for each other. And yet as I look back upon the cottage it seems to me remarkable that there was not more friction.

It was an almost impossible situation ; forty women or thereabouts, of all sorts and kinds, suffering from a great variety of aberrations

and deviations from the normal—all miserable and discontented. Why we did not follow the historic example of the Gingham Dog and the Calico Cat and " eat each other up " has always been a mystery. I think the fact that most of us had been even more miserable than we were there contributed to a fairly passive attitude. We were somewhat broken in spirit. Fear of the " big house " hung over the cottage in a rather wholesome fashion ; any disturbance and back went the offender. We saw this happen frequently. The possibility of occupation helped a great deal, as did the fact that many of the women, away most of the day, were too weary to protest when they returned. The nurses in this cottage were in many ways of superior type and managed with a great deal of tact, warding off storms on many occasions.

Personally, I had no real difficulty after I went to Cottage B. The Doctor told me afterwards that the head nurse had thought that she herself was in danger of becoming an inmate when she transferred me ; my reputation for rage and destruction had become so well known it seemed impossible that I could be moved with safety. The Doctor was determined to make the experiment, and it worked. I was never in danger of being " sent back " and I settled into place rather quickly. Violence entirely disappeared, though I was still

cruelly far on the other side of normal. The road seemed endless.

Day after day, week after week, I sat at the window, or stood on the heavily-screened porch and watched other people "go home." There were sounds of happy greetings, a quick, joyous good-bye; and two people walked down to the big gate and *opened* it. A wave of the hand; we watched the figures disappear. Always, after these departures the rooms seemed smaller and more cramped; the appeal of the out-of-doors, stronger. Listlessness began to give way to an overmastering desire for freedom. Fall came. The leaves were yellow again, and red. The garden flamed with furry coxcombs, zinias, golden glow, asters, and great, velvet rich, dahlias. Every day Mrs. Ellis came into the cottage with her arms full; she arranged the flowers caressingly; they burned with a vitality that was entirely out of keeping with those dull rooms. A field of straw flowers glinted stiffly in the sun. The "ladies" made quaint bouquets of them, "up against the winter time when we won't have no posies." I only looked on. My guest had returned from her summer vacation.

"Aren't you going to take me home, now?" I asked.

"No, dear," she answered.

"Surely I am not going to have to stay in this place *all* winter."

"The Doctor says so."

"But I haven't even a room of my own here; I can't endure that dormitory. I loathe being 'in a row.' I can't stand sleeping near anyone. They curse so, too, and groan."

"The Doctor says she is sorry but they are very crowded. She will do the best she can." I am afraid her first visit was not too pleasant; I was desperate and in a state of acute irritability. "How could they expect me to be cooped up like this all winter, months and months? How could they?"

"The Doctor says nothing interests you; she thinks you would be better if you did something."

"Do you see anything very interesting here?" I asked scornfully. "I would do something if I were at home. I think I might begin to be quite useful."

"Isn't there anything I can bring you?"

"*No*, there *isn't*," I said morosely.

She rose to go; I turned and left her suddenly. It was just too much! I did not even say good-bye. When my resentment died down, I was sorry about that. My feeling changed into one of deep depression. I could hardly open my lips to answer the simplest question. I was utterly weighted down by the thought of the coming months. I had so hoped . . . For days I sat looking straight before me while the women arranged their

straw flowers, chatting as they worked. Nothing could rouse me ; neither the Doctor nor Mrs. Ellis. My favourite nurse made every effort to divert me. I only looked at her with eyes so filled with woe that she turned away knowing her attempts were useless.

After a few weeks I gave up the fight ; I stopped hoping and, as always, I felt better ; or rather the absence of feeling was grateful. I was again in the emotional vacuum of despair. I began to do little things about the cottage. I was here ; there was no reason for doing these small tasks of course, but equally no reason for not. And after all, one's muscles ached from sitting still *all* the time. I could not keep to one occupation very long, even so simple an undertaking as dusting a room. I was unable to concentrate, and I moved slowly and clumsily. I simply did not work as a complete organism, but in disconnected bits. I was poorly co-ordinated muscularly just now, and was somehow conscious of it. I knew that even when I managed to care enough about a piece of work to keep my mind on it, the " job " was unmercifully hard. My tools were out of gear. I got very little relief from such attempts, but simple as they were they became steps in the right direction. I was making contact, however slight, with actual objects.

I also assumed a slight proprietary attitude

towards the cottage. After I had dusted that table about fifty times it became my table. It was my task to keep it in order, see that it had flowers on it, and a fresh cover, see that things were not left around, that books were kept in fairly neat piles, and knitting left in its proper bag. Woe to the offender !

" I'd have you know that's my sewing you're picking up."

" Why did you leave it there ? I dusted this place this morning. We can't have things in a mess when the Doctor comes. How do you think the table would look with everybody's things on it ? " Such encounters were usually fairly friendly, and served to mark out a " natural distribution of labour."

The one thing that made the long weeks pass at all was the fact that I was still so far from strong that I spent a large part of my time on the couch in a sort of half-stupor. I would rise for my meals and return to my couch, asking only to be quiet. I was partly asleep, partly too lacking in energy to remember what I had been thinking about two minutes before. The effort at adjustment to even so simple a situation as that which Cottage B presented was all I could manage. A half-hour's activity with a number of people about me was enough to make me more than eager to " lie by " for the rest of the day. A visit from my guest often completely exhausted me. Even the

Doctor's coming was, at times, fatiguing, simply because it was a bit unusual and was always heralded by a stir.

The delusions of identity still persisted. One day I nearly jumped through the netting on the porch. "There's my uncle!" I cried out. The Doctor happened to be near. "Where?" she asked. "Right there—that man carrying a clothes basket." "No, Jane, no; that isn't your uncle; that is Mr. Simpson, an attendant who has been here for years." There was a slight battered resemblance, and off and on for months Mr. Simpson continued to be "my uncle." Just what my uncle, that impeccable gentleman—who could never be persuaded to go near a market because of deadly fear of being asked to hold a brown paper bag—just what he would have thought of my watching him go by with a basket full of freshly-laundered clothes, I am at a loss to know. What he would think now did he realize that he is frequently referred to as "the clothes basket uncle" is also a dangerous question.

My family were in my mind, constantly, and my relations with them remained serene. One source of difficulty, only, existed between me and my constant visitor—the matter of "things." I could not stand having her bring me even the most necessary articles. It gave me a humiliating sense of dependence, though they were strictly my own, and

emphasized my lack of freedom. "Think of having some one buy your handkerchiefs for you and even your hairpins," I railed inwardly. I was most ungracious on these occasions.

"But they are yours, bought with *your* money," she would insist kindly.

"But you had to get them for me."

"It's no trouble when I am shopping for other things."

"I'm sure it must be; besides, I'd *rather* do it *myself*."

In this manner I curtailed my own comfort a great deal, and her pleasure in easing my path. I was so fierce on being presented with a fresh lace collar or a new scarf that I mostly went without. I would have been burned alive before I would have asked for the slightest necessity. Occasionally, however, she found out about things I wanted in queer ways.

"Old Boots"—my brother—"Old Boots" sent me some candy this morning. It was very pretty, but I traded it for some of Mrs. Ellis's toilet soap.

"Do you mean to tell me you haven't had soap?"

"Oh, yes, we have soap all right. They say it is made by my neighbours in the penitentiary; it smells that way, worse than the yellow laundry kind; it's awful. Everything reeks with it." Next to the blankets that soap was my chief source of annoyance. I

could never get it out of my nostrils. I would smell it in my sleep ; or find that it assailed me even when I was in the fresh air. The odour was not really obnoxious, simply cheap and particularly irritating to me. It epitomized for me all the things I hated about the cottage, the stiff square furniture, the particular shade of green on the walls. The institutional character of the place was summed up in the smell of that soap. At times it grew unbearable. I would find my fingers digging deep into the varnish underneath the arm of my chair ; I fairly *scratched* with aversion.

5

Christmas came again and with it my guest and her pretty package. I was much mortified that I had no gifts for her. " I could have made something," I thought to myself, " if I had only shown a little gumption." She told me of her plans. " And can't I go home—just for the day ? " I asked. Of course I could not. This seemed to me unreasonable. A number of the other patients were going home for Christmas, why not I ? My reaction to this refusal was one of indignation. It is the only time I can remember that I had any resentment toward my family, and this was short-lived.

" Very well," I thought to myself. " If I can't go home, I shall forget all about them—

slam. They needn't think I can't get through alone—we'll see about this." A group of the younger patients were stringing popcorn for the tree. I sat down and worked with them. It was the first real move I had made in their direction. They were very kind and soon we began to chat quite gaily. One after another they told what they had done on "Christmas at home." The Doctor found us still busy when she came in. She looked at me in surprise. "I am glad," she said, "that you are finding something to do." "She needn't think I'm doing it because I want to," I thought with momentary bitterness; yet somehow that night at supper our spirits kept up. We worked until our early bedtime.

The next day we opened our gifts. Mine were "just lovely" they thought. I stopped suddenly in the middle of the "celebration"; took my things into the "clothes room," leaving a basket of fruit and nuts where the nurse had put it on the table: "You can have that," I said to Mrs. Ellis. I sat down in a little alcove off one of the halls with my face pressed against the window-pane. My resentment had died down; my spirit of bravado was quite gone. I was overcome with homesickness again and loneliness. It was like some live thing within that clawed me. I moved uneasily on the couch trying to shift the pain. The Doctor spoke to me. I did

not move. She spoke again, "Aren't you going to open your gifts with the others?" she asked.

"I did."

"Aren't you going to wish me 'Merry Christmas?'"

"I hope it will be very nice," I said feebly. "Merry Christmas, in this place," I half moaned to myself. "Merry Christmas here where no one *can* be happy, where mothers are separated from their children, and old women from their friends. Why did the 'Little God' bother to be born into a world like this?" I wondered. "Why did He?" I was paying the full price for a slight measure of recovery. I was entering upon a state of keen realization, without as yet any inhibitions or diverting circumstances to mitigate it. But the knife of returning perception cut clean; there was little rancour or wild rebellion from this time on.

When spring came I was given my privilege. My nicest nurse put her hand on my shoulder. "The Doctor says you can go out this morning."

"Says I can go out? How?"

"Why," she answered, "I will unlock the door and out you go. See!"

She unlocked the door and gave me a playful push. I stumbled down the steps and out onto the sidewalk. It was one of those "blue days" of May. The sky was blue and bright,

flecked with small clouds, soft and downy; the air was filled with a moist blue haze that crept into the shadows to deepen them and clung like a garment about any little hidden distance. I looked up and filled my eyes with the blueness, breathed it in, absorbed it through every hungry pore. I started to move; it was the first time I had been out alone for three years, save for that one walk when I had managed to escape from Ward No. 13. I was almost frightened; everything looked strange and new, now that I was not being herded in a straight line along the walks. It suddenly occurred to me that I could walk on the grass if I chose. That gave me a momentary objective. I went until there seemed no further reason for remaining on the lawn; what next?

It is very strange to have no "next." I had none. I had longed for a chance to taste a little freedom. But what should I do with it? Where should I go? Nowhere. I walked and stopped; and walked again. I was utterly without inner propulsion. The Doctor saw me and told me afterward that I looked as if there were something wrong with my "steering gear." I went first in one direction, then in another. I spied a patient looking longingly over the fence. "Hello," she called. I noted enviously the free way she swung along. She knew where she was going and what she wanted.

"She is better than I am; she is more used to things," I thought sadly. That first morning was not altogether pleasurable. I remembered my old purposeful self. There were always more places to reach than I could, by any possible effort, achieve . . . and now . . . I could not look that thought in the face very long.

"Hear you've got a privilege," remarked Sadie, who knew all the things that happened to other patients before they did themselves. "Gee, I wish the Doctor's give me one. Miss Lamont had one but she lost it."

"How did she lose it?"

"She never got to meals on time and the nurses were always having to hunt for her. You haf to watch your step a'right when you've got a privilege. I lost my last one," she continued confidentially, "because I biffed Maggie Andrews in the jaw. Well, she was always taking my beeswax when I needed it for my iron and I got sick of her cheek. Gosh, I wish I had my privilege back though . . . I'll ask the Doctor." Sadie grinned cheerfully. Sadie amused me; she was so brisk, and so eager, like a busy little fox-terrier, into everything, only she was not nearly so quick or smart.

I made up my mind to keep my privilege, and I did. Sometimes when I had failed to hear the first dinner bell I rushed back to the cottage with my heart between my teeth. What if they cooped me again, what if they

would not let me go this afternoon? I never forgot that I had to "watch my step," never for a moment. Mrs. Ellis aided me in my efforts though she was not so successful herself. She had a set habit of going where she knew she had no right to go, but fortunately refrained from such excursions when I was with her.

It was she who took me in hand on the afternoon following my first walk. "Get your sweater," she said, "and I'll show you the mound."

"What mound?"

"There is an Indian mound down in the fields."

"What are you waiting for?" I queried. We were standing in the hall.

"For the Laundry Ladies."

"But we're not going to the laundry."

"We have to go with them, just the same. The nurses won't get up every time we want to go out; we have to watch our chance." This proved my chief difficulty with the nurses. I was always wanting to go out at odd times; it continued to be a source of friction which was only removed by my final resolution to go early in the morning and come in only for meals. I would willingly have skipped some of these but it was "against the rules" and my precious privilege was the price.

Mrs. Ellis and I made our way toward the

mound. This was something like; we were going somewhere. I moved with more assurance. We went down the "hill" in front of the big building, down a pretty little wooded path, across a deeply-shaded road and out on the edge of the fields. We could see the blue jackets of "the men" as they stooped over sprouts of timid young green. The mound rose before us. It was quite large, surrounded by wide spreading elms and blanketed with white violets. This was a world I had not seen for years. I knelt down and touched the flowers very gently, lifting up their delicate heads, smoothing out the dried leaves at their roots. I looked up the mound, my eyes on a level with their stems. They were thick as the grass. I listened; they rustled and whispered; it was like the shadow of a sound. The sun shone upon them, revealing the exquisitely veined petals and the detail of their dark centres.

Without effort, through an involuntary response to the pale enchantment of that mound, I was making my first natural, unstrained contact—the first in months and months. I was filled with a pleasure that was very new. We talked little, but sat among the roots—taking the greatest care not to disturb the flowers—and breathed in great drafts of the cool spring air, and of freedom.

6

As a result of being out-of-doors, I grew stronger and much more active; my initiative began to return. There was no longer any difficulty about my "doing things." Occasionally some one tried to stop me. "You will wear yourself out walking so much; you are as thin as a rail. Why don't you lie down a little as you used to?" They might as well have tried to hold back the wind; I was off! I was out of my cage and I was going to stay out. I did get very thin, but I also began to get tanned a little, and I am sure must have looked and seemed more alert, and a trifle more human. But the freedom was not all joy; it had in it much of the quality of tantalization. "I can go out now; I am very strong and well, physically. Why do I have to be here—why—why?" My social consciousness began to return and I became fairly rampant. "It isn't fair for me to be here, just eating and doing nothing like an animal. Think of all the people who work hard every day, hours and hours, and then can't get food enough for their families. It's awful. I'm not even a 'submerged tenth'; I am lower than that. If it weren't for a bit of money, I'd be a 'state ward,' one of the great problems and burdens of the commonwealth, as the Sunday papers say."

I raged on : " Here I am, not even a citizen. I can't write my own name and have it mean anything. Nothing is mine, unless some one thinks it's 'good for me.' I'm just nothing in this world but a patient in B Cottage of the Insane Asylum—yes, me. And think what I wanted to be . . ." A little of this is enough. Life became less and less desirable as I grew more alert, more able to take in the situation. " I will have to get out of this somehow—it doesn't make much difference what the way is but I'll have to go." The profound distaste for life that had been mine from the beginning began to assert itself more and more strongly. Over against it was the beauty of the outside world which was now mine.

I hung balanced between my impulses to hurl myself out—anywhere, by any means—and the gentle tug of an anemone root down on the hillside. No one, not even I, could tell which pull would be the stronger. The Doctor watched very carefully, knowing well the dangers of returning realization together with even a little freedom. When I grew white and set with desperation, she said she held her breath ; she could only trust to . . . the anemone. I became more keenly awake to the out-of-doors than I had ever been. Mrs. Ellis knew much more than I, and with an old " Botany " in her hand she led me into green nooks and shady hollows where I learned new

names and made new acquaintances every day. She put me through my paces as if I were a child in school. This must have been very good for me. I began once more to use my mind *for something*. It did not now merely turn in upon itself and all but tear me to pieces by its uncontrolled jerks and drives; it steadied as it found something to work against—like a car that has been skidding and feels the road again.

My powers of observation became very acute, more acute than they had been before—or have been since. This was partly because I had unlimited leisure to look. There was absolutely nothing to interfere. I had all the days of summer to keep filled; and, as yet, there was nothing to fill them with but looking. I looked and looked and *looked*. I remember especially lying out-of-doors one morning. I was alone and the passage of time seemed particularly slow. I began to watch the grass. I started as from a dream some hours later when I was called to lunch. I had just discovered the minute shadow that one grass blade—just small ordinary grass—throws against another. I watched these tiny lines of dark and light change and shift with every movement of the wee green leaves. No one had ever called my attention to this. I had never heard it spoken of or seen it written about. The delicate network of light and shade, which men call a "lawn," was peculiarly mine. I spent much

time watching it, and have always cherished the discovery. " And if grass has so much to say, what about other things ? " I watched the leaves on a given tree until their shape and transparency were etched upon my mind ; I looked into a garden lily until I knew its every shade and mood ; how it glowed beneath the hot sun, how it seemed timid at three, how it drooped and began to rest at six. I begged for permission to visit the garden in the evening. I leaned over it at seven and it " was gone, its spirit flown, it will not answer me until morning " ; the flower had merged into the coming twilight.

At night I went to bed with these things in my mind. I had something to think about. Often the day's pictures would quite shut off the animal-like snarls and curses of my neighbour on the right when she was " disturbed," or the penetrating moans of the woman on my left, crying for her daughter. Often I went peacefully to sleep, still in the garden or thinking myself back under the branches of my favourite great oak. But I was not always so fortunate. There were times when nothing could hold me. I wanted to go home. I felt so caged there in that little room. We had to go to bed at eight *in summer*. It was not yet dark. It would be hours and hours before I was really sleepy. When outdoors failed me, I had no defences.

"If only there were one person I could speak to"; there always used to be—"if some one would just say my name or straighten this sheet, I could get through the night." No one came but the night nurse, flashing the light of her lantern down the hall. I turned and tossed. Would the darkness never end? Then something new happened; I began to cry. I cried with weariness and longing. I cried and cried and cried. The next morning I arose white with exhaustion, but perhaps a little relieved. Anyway I knew I was too tired to feel anything for a number of days. That was to be desired above all else. I still watched my mounting emotions with dread and shrinking. The rhythm continued unbroken, changing only its expression.

"What do you mean by keeping me awake all night?"

"I didn't keep you awake; I heard you snore most of the time."

"Well, I guess I heard you cry."

"Maybe it was yourself you heard." I was much ashamed of tears. "Old Boots" had brought me up with a true masculine scorn of weeping. "Anything I can't stand it's bawling," he had said at the mature age of fourteen, "and if you want to make a fuss, go do it where you can't be seen *or* heard." As a result of my adoration for him I used to wait all day until I went to bed, "for a chance

to cry." Here in B Cottage it still humiliated me to be discovered.

I choked on my breakfast that morning and lay about limply all day. Even the out-of-doors did not resume its call until late afternoon, and then I walked only a little way and sat idly in a swing, hardly seeing the sun as it sank gold behind the trees. It was late August; my visitor would be coming back. Then we would see. The time was not far off, I felt wearily, when something decisive would have to happen. An old bent figure crossed my path. "No," I said with firm conviction, "I cannot stay here until I am like that. I cannot." I am still of the opinion that I was right. No matter what the outcome I do not believe it would have been that. Had my gathering forces been all marshalled into one drive of desperation, I should certainly have wrung freedom from those walls and grounds no matter what the cost. I began to think about it definitely and very coolly.

My visitor did come; and I did not go with her. This time I was only sad, sadder than I had ever been. I was astonished at the strength of my feeling. There was not an inch of me that was not filled with an all-pervading sorrow. I had begun to see that life might be good; the world was certainly beautiful to look upon. I did not want to see the end of it here, shattered, marred, and incomplete. And

yet they must know I could not stay—not very much longer—within these dulling, cramping barriers. The anemone pulled. "Well, I will give things a little more chance; I am better some; I will try to wait until spring."

This was increasingly harder. It grew so cold I could not stay out-of-doors long at a time. As the days became sharper and more bleak I often walked near the railroad track. I knew at what hours trains passed. I stood many times and watched them thundering by. "No, not that way." I was too sane and too cowardly, and my imagination far too active. "I will wait for spring." Still the impulse was strong. I began to slim down a little, to skip a meal when I could. I must not resist too strongly when the hour came—if it was to come; I must be ready. Having made that decision I went on about whatever affairs I could in any way consider my own.

I had a hard, long, dull pull. I worked about the cottage more and more; I tried to sew a little. I was bored to the complete extinction of all other feelings; this was perhaps fortunate. Then, a miracle took place. "Say, Jane," Sadie remarked one day, "why don't you ask the Doctor if you can go to the library?"

"To the what?"

"To the library; you and Mrs. Ellis are always talking about books and things."

"Where is the library?"

"In the big building, right off the drug room. It's open. Why don't you ask?" Sadie was my good angel. The next afternoon I sat without moving until I was called to supper. I was *out* again; cold, wind, sleet, could not affect me as long as I could make my way to the library. I used my own card and the cards of three other patients. I read alone, and later a very charming little woman, of whom I was fond, read to me. We spent long afternoons in her room, a box of fruit or candy to be shared between us, reading and reading. I do not remember very much about the first books. They were most of them light, a number, pure trash. But they took us away from our unhappiness and they consumed time —that was the great thing—hours and hours of it.

The general effect of this was, of course, stimulation, and stimulation still meant pain. I grew more and more discontented with idleness, with being a "drag on the family, on everybody." I heard the nurses discussing how much it would cost to repaint the cottage in the spring. "All that money spent on wreckage," I thought. "What wouldn't it do for real people, people who need scholarships and opportunities for study and education?" I dashed my brains against the insoluble problem of the non-contributing portion of

society to which I now belonged so wholly. I began to clamour for "something to do, something useful." The answer to my demands was not very satisfactory, but it helped a little. I took reports back and forth, carried messages, went for drugs.

The thing I liked best was the early morning report. I was called at six or a little after. I slipped into my heavy coat and was "let downstairs and out of the door, alone." This in itself was a rest. I flew through the starlight dusk of the winter mornings. The sky was so far and coolly grey, the fading light of the stars so delicate. All about me the buildings were mercifully covered by the dimness of the dawn. This was my most keenly personal moment. I stretched to my greatest distance here. My thoughts and feelings rose as high as those tiny silver-gold points of brightness. They were so calm and sure. Everything was so big; there was so much no one knew . . . perhaps there was a chance; perhaps I might borrow quiet from these far stars. Yes, I would try to wait "till spring."

Yet in spite of books, in spite of a greater number of diversions, the days were grilling. There were few hours of numbness now. I had to rise and take the experience standing, as it were. I could manage to do this just so long and then I would collapse. A night or week of nights came when I wept wildly. I

could not stand it; no, I could *not*. I could not endure another day in that dining-room with its gobs of food; I could not listen another moment to the tangled, sometimes obscene jargon that went on about me. I could not face those women one more morning, grey, drab, limp as they were. The protesting ones disgusted me; those who were resigned met my scorn. No, I could not stand it; I could not wait for spring. I would shut my eyes to the ice-covered trees glinting in the sun; I would be blind to the magic curves in the snowdrifts on the hills. Nothing should hold me. In fact there was very little that could; the usual social restraints were not effective; was I not as far outside the pale as I could ever get—the fact that I realized such illicit exits "were not done," were flimsy and rather vulgar, had no weight. What could be cheaper, more flimsy, or more vulgar than every hour of my every day!

Christmas came and passed, bleakly. I ceased to hope, and yet I was not quite dead to pain. I decided coolly and simply that I would make a try. If I were successful, all right; if not, then I would do my best to "get well by spring." If both failed I would wait until all was clear and make another trial which should somehow be sure. Maybe I could get a job in the drug room after a while and learn about the best way. The assistant in

there now was a patient. For the present I would do the best I could. My method was crude. Under an assumed name I purchased some bichloride of mercury tablets from a near-by druggist. I apparently got the wrong kind—big blue ones used for disinfecting purposes. I put three of them in a biscuit and ate the biscuit after breakfast on a January morning. There are no words to describe the taste of that biscuit; it bit and skinned my tongue; my whole being turned inside out in horrified revolt. I kept on quietly and finished the bun. I had not long to wait; I must have got too much. I was persistently and violently ill. Sadie discovered my plight. She had some keenness: "What you been up to?"

"Nothing," I gasped; "I'm just sick, but I'll give you my rose-coloured sweater." She loved it. "I'll give it to you if you won't tell; I hate to be fussed over when I'm sick. I don't want the Doctor to know." I was well aware of my great peril. If I were discovered it meant a back ward for months and months; no freedom for a year perhaps. I was lying on the couch when the Doctor came through. I think the nurse had a faint suspicion, but I looked so innocently sleeping as they passed that she said nothing. I did not breathe until the next morning when I was able to crawl about again. "Well," I decided, "you made your throw and lost; now see what you can

do about getting well. If you stop reading junk and use your old mind, it might help some ; it would be good to have a job ; see what you can do. You made your throw and lost." Having thus reasoned I settled down to work ; all my energy went in one direction. I did not look back. Control was beginning to be possible. I wasted no time in " fits," as I called my outbreaks. Spring would soon be here.

I began to read real books : Montaigne, Lamb, Hazlitt. I had time, plenty of it, and I read with reasonable care and thought. I turned to Carlyle and Emerson. Emerson helped me a great deal. His bracing qualities served as a tonic to my shattered spirits. Out of " Self-reliance," I carved a world of my own. It had nothing to do with my family, nothing to do with the hospital. It had only to do with me, and my effort to " *make something* even out of this." I grew independent ; I saw little of the other patients. I curled into a corner and worked. I read and thought. I made myself answer questions. I reviewed what I had read. " You old creaky mind, you," I scolded, " get up and go through your paces ; you've *got to*." That mind behaved much like a lazy Sicilian donkey ambling along in the sun ; it did not have the power of forward motion. It just rocked from side to side. I lashed and goaded, on the whole joyously. I was busy. I had a job !

One morning the Doctor said, "Jane, would you like to have charge of the library?" I was on the top of the wave. It was as musty, dusty, ill-assorted a lot of books as ever came into the care of enthusiastic hands. But they were mine. I had the key to the shelves in my pocket. I pinned it to my pillow at night; and walked with my hand dug deep into the wool of my sweater where it lay comfortably nested. My morale came up with a bang: "I can't go over to that library looking like this," I decided. I began to take account of stock. My hair was a straw stack; my hands rough and neglected; my dresses sagging and ill-fitting.

Up to this time I had no care for personal appearance. My attitude had been that of the small boy who when told to wash his hands asked "why?" I had no incentive; life was a mess; so was I, and that was the end of it. Another factor had also interfered. When we were dressing we were always locked in upstairs. I hated to be locked on the second floor. It made me excruciatingly restless. And always there had been the tugging hope that "they might come for me" and the absurd thought that "I will be shut up here and they won't wait." I now conquered my aversion to the second floor and asked the Doctor for the very special privilege of a bath every day, and not just on "bath days." I struggled with my

rough thatch of hair and even rehemmed my skirts—all my efforts directed towards that musty library.

What was really happening, I suppose, was the re-establishment of old habits. I had a "job" and felt that I must be up to it and ready for it. As a matter of fact, I was not up to it. I had a hard time keeping track of dates and the week books were due, but I managed not to lose any; and at last succeeded in bringing the alphabetical file to some kind of law and order; and even rearranged the shelves, dividing fiction, history, literature, as best I could. My natural inaccuracy, together with my general unsteadiness, tripped me up every now and then with a maddening effect; yet I persisted; I went to the carpenter's shop for glue, raided the hospital "store" for paper, and spent long rainy afternoons mending the books.

Perhaps the final saving element was that now I had some place to *be*. I did not have to stay out-of-doors until I was blue with cold or sit in the cottage listening to things I hated to hear. I could curl up on the window sill of the library and be quiet and alone—to be alone was bliss. "And no one will fuss about me or question me; they know I am here." My measure of peace was complete, though still greatly coloured by unhappiness and doubt as to the outcome of my experiment. In spite

of this doubt and the harrowing uncertainty of every day, something kept me *trying*. I could not have stopped if I had wanted to. Something had got to work within me; down in the engine room the pumps were throbbing. Whether or no, the whole being had to respond, had to move. The signal had been given; up somewhere in some unknown chart-room of my being the course was set.

7

All this time I was absorbing, pouring in; the preceding summer and fall I had been filling my mind with outdoor impressions. An inevitable reaction was due. It came. I was seized with a sudden fascination in regard to words; I studied them, repeated them to myself, tried to fit them to objects and impressions. Then I began to write. This had a great advantage over just reading because I could plan it in bed; no lights were permitted. The wakeful evenings upstairs became shortened; the mental effort not only entertained me but tired me and so induced sleep. The results would no doubt have had a similar effect on any reader, but these first attempts at statements were invaluable in their effect. I was now sure to be supplied with material for thought; doubt, pain, loneliness, longing, could no longer fix themselves upon me with their old

deadly grip. I held my first halting efforts high and triumphant like a shield to protect me from my advancing foes. I caught the rising rhythm of hyper-activity and threw it into a verse!

Why a verse, I do not know! I had never written verses or much of anything else before. I had entirely escaped the poetry urge of adolescence. I can think of but one conscious reason for these "poems"—the rhymes and metre, however halting, had a soothing effect. They quieted me by day and made sleep more quickly available at night than did unmarked prose. I am able to make some personal connection with even the darkest phases of the hospital experience, but with the verses, none. What hidden part of me emerged in those attenuated strivings after "sweetness and light," I am at a loss to know. I would not own them save that they were found by a member of my family in the pocket of my coat and saved from the cleaner's gasoline by mere chance. They are still in my possession —little crumpled bits of paper: bags, report blanks, anything I could pick up—and they are there under compulsion. I promised my visitor to save them for her though my own impulse was to "ditch them" with all haste. I can remember writing the lines, can recall the order of their production fairly well, but I have no emotional kinship with them what-

soever. I look at them and blink—"what *have* they to do with me?" As to the versification it reminds one of nothing so much as a certain ditty to the effect that:

"There was a young man of Japan
Who wrote verses that never would scan.
They said, 'Tell us your plan.'
He replied, 'I put all the words in the last line that I can.'"

My plan seems to have been equally far from Hoyle, and not nearly so original. I don't see how the verses could be much worse, but as records of a mind desperately trying to right itself they are interesting to me, and they prove, I think conclusively, what was the major factor in my recovery, namely, the influence of the out-of-doors. I saved up summer impressions. In January they began to trickle forth feebly, the first sap, and *like* sap, giving no idea of the pushing force behind them. Colourless, sugary, but indicative of a deeply implanted susceptibility toward rehabilitation, they lie in a mussed heap upon my desk. I am sure this was the first:

A Maple Tree

I think that trees are more than trees;
They are homes for birds and homes for bees,
And in their inmost heart is kept
A hamadryad, hair wind-swept.
A maple leaf may be to you a maple leaf,
It is to me—the sign of her within the tree,

A little shield of chlorophyll
That now hangs lax when the wind is still ;
Again, a bit of armour bright
That battle braves with sheer delight
So it may guard the unseen sprite.

In an earlier writing of this, for " hamadryad " I had " Haemadryad," the kind of a meaningless syllable that may often crop up from an uncritical inner consciousness. The word " chlorophyll " came from my " botany " studies with Mrs. Ellis. Left to myself I should never have used it. The sound of the word fascinated me and I think I began to write, with the line " A little shield of chlorophyll."

The order of the other verses came about as follows :

A Locust Tree

The locust tree has long green thorns
A stickly, prickly thing ;
But O in the spring
A cloud of blossoms it adorns—
A bower of white,
With little cups for bees' delight,
Little chalices rare and bright.
The thorns are there
To protect each cup with care
And to keep the marauding bee—
Teasing, stinging enemy—
From swooning quite
In the lusciousness of June.
O happy partnership of thorn and bloom,
A locust tree !

The thing that strikes me as I re-read these first so-called verses is that they are fairly good examples of infantilism. In each case the concept and expression do not reach a level above that of a busy twelve-year-old.

White Violet

Where did Winter go, O say, which way ?
Look at the white violet ;
Who could forget !
It's a snow flake, not frozen cold,
But blooming up through the blackening mould.
A link it is, between Winter and Spring,
A fragile, dainty thing,
Too dainty quite for summering.
No part of June
With flaunting rose all apose
And scarlet tanager on the wing.
A bit of Winter lingering yet,
A white regret
That it must go soon.

This was of course suggested by my visits to the Indian mound with Mrs. Ellis.

The next verse is perhaps a little more nature in quality ; it came later than the foregoing. I think of it here because it is still largely picture with no attempt at analysis or direct emotional expression.

Birch Trees

Birch trees, ghosts among trees,
Gleaming white, swaying in the wind,
Are you come to tell us of a land
Where trees are born of the thought of God

Before they are lifted from the sod ?
Or are you a returned spirit,
Birch tree, ghost among trees,
Gleaming white, swaying in the wind,
Come to tell us of the world where trees are sent
When by men felled and forespent—
A visible memory ?

Rain

The rain is mine : cold and dark and grey
It falls in torrents down the darkening day ;
Scuds like a black thought
Across the bright sky,
An enemy to some, glowering by,
To me a friend that wraps me like a cloak
In fog and mist—
And when the sun comes out at last
Weaves me a rainbow gown of gleaming gold and amethyst.

Rain that asks no questions
Nor for good nor bad has a care,
Rain falling all about me
And clinging to my hair.

. . . . . .

" Rain " was unfinished, but there is enough here to give a hint of the enormous relief that came from contact with outdoors. On a very soiled scrap of paper is a bit more about the rain, in prose :

" The impartiality of nature is what means so much to me. Wherever people are, there is the element of judgment ; always one weighing the other even if unconsciously. But out-of-doors there is

none of that. When I was little—about nine—I learned the meaning of my nickname, the Greek root, meaning water. I used to run out to meet the storm. We are *on duty* together, the rain and I. Ideal partnership; I lifted my face; it enveloped me—a friend—showered and beat about me—No questions, no blame or praise; a part of me, me a part of it. Ideal companionship—the rain and I."

I was marked by the hospital phraseology. Certainly I would not have written "on duty" just there, had it not been for the constant use of those words by the nurses.

The next I remember quite well; I was lying on the grass just before time "to go to bed." I had seen the evening star make its serene entry into visibility. I wrote, before I went to bed, on a scrap of wrapping paper:

. . . . . .

A single blade of grass
Silhouetted against a whole blue sky!
Lying here level with the earth,
With careless glance I follow its stem
Up, up, up
Till sword-like it presses toward
And pierces the heart
Of the evening star.

I did not call this poetry or even "verse"; it was simply scratched down and left; I had a strict sense of limitations. I don't think I ever felt for a moment I was "writing anything." I was merely exercising my mind and giving myself occupation, and I knew it. All

this time I was reading real poetry : Browning and Shelley and Keats. They of course kept my standards impervious to my own splashes. I remember one morning walking across from the main building to the cottage. Something began to hammer gently in my brain. At first I thought I was "getting a tune without the melody." The little knock, knock continued. Then I recognized it as Browning's lines :

> "The grey sea and the long black land ;
> And the yellow half-moon, large and low ; "

I had got the metre without the words. "I am becoming verse-conscious," I smiled to myself. "Maybe it will help me to read and understand better." I continued to write because the drive was on, not because I felt that I was accomplishing anything in itself. I simply could not stop. An awakening mind has to use what materials are at its command ; these were mine :

AFTER OMAR

Over my little world I have thrown a sin ;
It gnaws and tears and eats within,
Like a cowering demon, a sneaking Ginn.
Where I was, am, or am to be, it has been.
Through it the stars are veiled ;
Through it the young day's most dazzling dyestuffs paled ;
The moon in sullenness has sailed,
And the magic dusk of the twilight failed.

How eagerly did I await the feast of the wild rose !
The cup where spring her first sweetness does condense,
By sense revealed, is dulled by sense ;
The taste, in tasting over much, is lost.

It is too late
Who knows the cost ?
Whether it were to feel the joy of summer, spring or frost,
Those first fine filaments,
By which each man perceives, are now dull discontents.
And as some sick spider weaves—
So thread by thread the veil is spread
That shuts me in.
Over my little world I have thrown a sin.

Just why I called this " After Omar " I don't quite know, except that I had been re-reading Fitzgerald ; some of the oriental imagery stuck and perhaps I hoped to play with it to the tune of a slight degree of imitation. I knew the effort was extravagant and I laughed at it ; and yet . . . perhaps there was a little of the old " sin delusion " that had pursued me as far back as the days of the sanatorium. There is certainly a little of my weariness and disgust. I did not realize this at the time. I simply regarded it as a *tour de force* that fizzled like a wet firecracker. I never gave these effusions a second thought when they were done. I have no idea why I kept them, unless I thought my

pocket safer than the wastebasket. I most certainly did not want to "get caught."

One Sunday a pious nurse was very active in her efforts to persuade me to go to church. I went off in a corner and sulked, having answered none too graciously, and wrote this:

A Lazy Religionist

Offer a prayer? I never have to pray;
I have only to stand and look,
And I find the words that I would say
Written for me everywhere, by Spring, every day.
Every leaf's a page in my communion book;
The birds sing my hymns,
With blossoms tipped to sing from,
On bare brown limbs.

When I had finished I felt less cross.

I was decidedly over my depth in "Wanderlust," but it is evident that I was trying to voice a long and hard-felt protest.

Wanderlust

"Eyes are windows by which we see the world." [1]
Through lashes, shaded and curled,
Mountains are lodged and whole forests of leaves unfurled;
(And) Waterfalls are splashed and hurled
Into the brain.

[1] I think I probably put quotes here because I did not want to admit even to myself that I was guilty of such a platitudinous platitude.

Oh, why, then am not I
As great as these ?
Since a blue lake, endless acres of trees,
Rivers, peninsulas, shoreless seas,
Whole cities, once viewed, go with me, where'er I go ?

But if I remain still,
The windows close from weariness of sameness,
From ugliness and plainness I will be wrought,
Who from God, as all men, at the price of pain was
brought
Into the heritage of the sun.

O then to go and mirror largeness,
Refract the light,
And not like night
Absorb me into myself !

This has many marginal scrubbings that are illegible. The only one I can decipher is an "and" put in parentheses. I apparently wrestled with form and then flatly gave up. I had howled my howl. That was probably all I required at the moment.

In March the cottage was much torn up by painters. We were moved out of our rooms and very closely herded into the "dormitories." On the first night I had one of my revealing flashes when the ugliness of the place stood out stark. This was followed by nostalgia which came forth unrestrained. "Don't you know you are disturbing people ?" said the night nurse. "I don't care if I am," I cried wildly. "I don't care about anything."

I looked at the ward with a shiver of recoil and beat my head on my pillow. "I think you ought to be ashamed; no one else likes it any better than you do; we are doing the best we can." She walked away in a state of just irritation. I was beyond all consideration for any one; only the fear of a freedom-curtailing report quieted me. I bit the sheet and composed the following, which is certainly about as nakedly emotional as it well could be. I was thinking of home, of course.

There is beauty everywhere; in field and tree,
In the blue bird's trill and the black bird's melody.
But none that I can see
Unless there be beauty hid somewhere in me.
Or unless thy hand all calm and wise
Be laid on my self-blinded eyes.
O then I think paradise would bloom,
And in the interstellar gloom
Every star would be a sun,
Mother of new worlds begun,
And every blade of grass would be
A passport visaéd by thee
To God.

I had lost all sense of proportion and was carried by a rush of feeling into what might be called rococo self-expression. But at least this outburst saved me from a further reprimand from the nurse. My morning report was innocently blank, though my tablet was not. The incongruity of "interstellar gloom" and

"passport" seems to me significant. I was apparently not fully sensible of differences, as yet.

On a candy sack is scrawled the last of these :

. . . . . .

O gnarled scrub oak,
Black with rage,
Twisted by hail and storm
Out of all semblance of a tree,
There on one withered branch, I see
A sprig of young spring green,
A slim young shoot, awry, uncouth—
Like the thought of your lost youth—
Answering all unwilling to the call of spring.
She lashes you to life, once more
To be green with her,
One mighty stir !

She will not let you rest,
But gives one taunt before
She passes into the dawn of summer,
Laughing at your withered age,
Half-naked in misshapen rage.
O gnarled scrub oak,
That nature with her pressure broke
And twisted out of all semblance of a tree,
Let all who may be old—pity thee.

This was written not after observing a scrub oak, but after watching the "men out for a walk," blasted human beings, writhing under the lash of their own cramped and fretting vitality ; too strong to die, too weak to live.

Here the pile of worn papers comes to its

end, and here my one futile call to the Muses. There are perhaps five more, written months later in a very different mood, but I regard them merely as an inconsiderable aftermath. I used the versifying for a given end ; when the need for it was over its production ceased as though it had never been—fortunately for my gradually emerging self-respect.

8

A bit of prose packed away with the verses, though planned at about the same time, was not actually written down until somewhat later. Its significance, it seems to me, lies in the fact that it shows a possessing idea, determinedly held below the level of consciousness, reappearing in different forms. In the sanatorium I thought a great deal of my mother ; then put the idea quite away from my conscious moments. But the thought pursued me to the hospital in the form of a persistent delusion and later emerged—as I suppose—in this little tale. I did not think of this at the time—" it is for grandmothers " was all I permitted myself to say. A short introduction of no importance precedes the sketch, which actually begins with the memoirs of an old priest who lived in a small French village during the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

"I am old and alone sitting in the door of my cottage. She has just died, my older neighbour, after ninety years of almost silent life. She talked very little to anyone ever, too busy with the washing and cooking at first, and after Jeanne went—who knows? She had but few words to say even on that day as she saw Jeanne go in her red dress and with the light on her face. They were simply: "Thy voices bid thee go. I, thy mother, cannot see them, your Margaret, Catherine and St. Michael. Thy father bids thee stay; and Jeanne, there is much to do, spinning and weaving, and Chinon is far away."

Jeanne went. News came of the clash of arms. A woman, nay, just our little girl from the village, had gone to the court of that half monarch, half man, Charles VII, lent him her strength, and gained, in return, armour, horses, and men. A girl in armour with soldiers about her—whispers came, too, not all of victory and glory. What of my old neighbour?

She said nothing, but it is reported that once, on the day Jeanne was wounded at Orleans, there came from her lips a shrill scream and they found her half fainting underneath the "Ladies' Tree" where Jeanne first heard her voices. She was babbling piteously and asking for "the three," Michael, Margaret and St. Catherine, begging that they would cease, leave Jeanne to her, her mother, let her return. The struggle was soon over. She was again within doors making ready the noonday meal.

Then one morning, miracle of miracles, the little cottage was without its owner. Madame d'Arc had gone alone to Reims. We saw her, on her return. Jeanne in all her flashing armour, wearing the blessed lilies, had stood beside my lord, the bishop, as he crowned Charles, King of France. The victory was won.

They say not all the brilliance of the court, nor the light of the Cathedral windows, nor the jewels of the crown on King Charles's head were as bright as the look that passed between Jeanne and my old friend in her simple homespun. We did not see that, and like her I have not seen Saints Margaret, Catherine, and St. Michael, but I did see the smile on the face of the mother of Jeanne d'Arc. So may our holy Virgin have looked on her day of triumph, Palm Sunday, when our Lord softened the hearts of Jerusalem. May she forgive me if I write it.

My friend only said: "Jeanne has saved France! Thank the Bon Dieu I did not bid her stay. She was always an obedient girl—Jeanne."

For a while we heard little, then this: The Bishop of Beauvais had placed Jeanne in the hands of the English. He wanted to be Cardinal, they say. For a few hundred francs they sold her. News came of the trial. Jeanne was condemned to the stake. Throughout the trial, word reached us she answered all questions with calmness and truth. Michael, Margaret, and Catherine she refused to renounce at the price of her life. A young girl, unlearned, alone, pitted against the scholarship of France and for what? The Bishop of Beauvais wanted to be Cardinal, "a limb of heresy must be cut off from the church," . . . and there were whispers.

During all the confusion of the village Madame d'Arc became more silent. Pain drew its cords tighter and tighter. Then, again, we heard of Madame's going away, this time to Rouen to say good-bye to Jeanne. The guards refused her. Yet somewhere in that mad surging crowd on that last day, the eyes that found the King out of all the court, caught sight of her.

Before she came to the market place Jeanne, for once her courage gone, lay in her cell tearing her hair and screaming. But on the pile of faggots she was quiet.

There are those who say it was the three saints who lifted her up to them and that she felt no pain. But I say it was the face of our friend in the crowd. Jeanne smiled at her mother. They piled the wood higher and higher. For Jeanne there was only that face. She held out her arms—once. They bound them. Madame rushed forward. The guards held her, and through it all those two looked. The mother of Jeanne d'Arc, they say, smiled at the Maid, smiled until the last curtain of smoke hid her from sight. I have never seen her smile since then, until to-day—not once in fifty years.

She has lived near us all that time. Jeanne's brother's daughter has another little one and that same brother is even now tilling the fields.

On her return from Rouen, Madame went about her work. We heard her say but this :

" Jeanne is burned at the stake. I would I *had* bid her stay. She was always an obedient girl—Jeanne."

She did her household duties much as before, but her sons tell me that as she knelt to build the fire under the pot each morning she whispered something of Rouen. Always that flame before her eyes—even under the pot of cabbage, who knows ? For fifty years on the day of Jeanne's death she slipped away to the church early in the morning to stand before the crucifix ; stand, not kneel. It was as if, perhaps, that tortured figure were bound somehow through pain to Jeanne. And one does not kneel to one's child. They found her to-day dead, standing

supported by the chancel rail. Her lips were caught in a smile. I never saw it until this morning. But it made me sure that it was she and not the three saints who lifted Jeanne above her agony at Rouen. Who can deny that it was she that sent the Maid to Chinon, King Charles' court? That is not what others say. But I have looked long on her face and I saw written there not one-half hour but fifty years of flame. Could Jeanne have known what I have seen she might have answered all those cruel questions of my lord, the Bishop of Beauvais, and his pack, with the simple words:

"I came partly because my mother sent me."

And to-day she would be sitting beside her sisters-in-law making her daughter's wedding-gown. Yet who can tell whether it was easier to meet the flames or the long days, in this troubled country, as her mother did; whether it were easier to live or to die?

The bell rings for matins—with the Bon Dieu be the rest!

9

My visitor sat opposite me in one of the little rooms, off the long hall.

"Have you asked the Doctor about me lately?"

"Yes, dear."

"What did she say?"

"She says you are much better."

"What about going home?"

"She thinks you will be able to."

"When?"

"She does not quite dare to decide that yet."

"Will it be very long?"

"I did not ask her."

"Is this mix-up about people—not knowing who is which—part of the reason why I have to stay?"

"Yes, dear."

"I can see that wouldn't do, not being sure whether I was talking to the plumber or the minister." We both smiled. "But I'll get to work on that, and check up on myself if I can. Do you think of anything else I could do beside reading and writing? Maybe if I got to work with my hands. What about that old typewriter?"

"I will take it down and have it fixed at once."

The next day I busied myself "checking up" on people. Every one who passed that was at all familiar went through the same process. "Who are you?" I would ask myself. "You are the man who picks up papers . . . you are *not* the Allisons' butler. Old Jim wouldn't thank me for that compliment." If I could not decide as to the identity of a given individual I made inquiries as unobstrusively as possible. Gradually the confusion disappeared, but it left me worn and limp from the effort. To go through that procedure ten times or so every half-hour was infinitely exhausting.

When the difficulty was finally overcome, I began to grow restless. "When may I leave,

when ?" I had many weeks to wait. I swung from hope to despair like a pendulum. I was worn by the rhythm of my conflicting attitudes of mind, but I kept on reading. I even began to write a few letters to my most intimate friends. Answers from the outside world, warm, cordial, vital, had a most bracing effect. There would be something to come *out to*. That made the effort doubly bearable. Life in the hospital was getting very trying because of my difficulties with the patients. They could see the change, and were naturally a bit envious. How well I knew! I was gradually slipping away from them. Even Mrs. Ellis seemed remote. She was mute with pain, my greater freedom making her own captivity all the more cruel. I was filled with sympathy, but I could not bridge the gulf. As I grew toward sanity, my connections with my housemates became more and more slender; it was inevitable. The little woman with whom I had read all winter was positively vitriolic at times. I had to "make myself scarce," as Sadie put it.

Sadie was also much better, and the two of us were together quite a lot. She was full of fun and the most naïve individual I have ever met. One day she made an unusually outlandish remark. I felt a queer tug somewhere inside of me; it hurt; I held my breath. What was it . . . it was a little terrifying, but still familiar.

I gave a gasp and another heave . . . then threw back my head and began to *laugh*. Sadie joined me and we laughed and laughed. The women dropped their sewing in surprise at the unwonted sound. Sadie and I laughed over everything that evening. And when the Doctor came we were dancing together. The Doctor laughed with us. She drew me aside, put her arm across my shoulder. "I think it is coming," she said. "I told you I thought some day you would recover very *suddenly*, and you have." I looked up at her, but said nothing. It was not the time to ask *when*.

"Did she say you could go home?" asked the ever alert Sadie.

"No, she just said I was coming along . . . so are you, aren't you, Sadie?" We laughed again. We laughed on the way to bed and cut capers till the nurse was in a state of kindly despair. In the morning we looked at each other, bent double and laughed once more, laughed and laughed. Sadie, bless her grin, had more to do with helping me through those weeks than she can ever know. Poor little Sadie with her hard, gay young husband and three children—two defective—Sadie was only twenty-four, and she could laugh!

One Sunday my favourite nurse called me to her. "You are going home for the day."

"But I haven't any summer hat."

"They are bringing you one. Come, I'll

help you." I sat on the edge of my bed and anchored a button on a new blouse. "Mrs. Prey, I'm worried about something."

"What is it?"

"Well, it's this new skirt that came last week. It's not much below my knees. How can I go, wearing that?"

"They all do."

"As short as *this*?"

"Shorter."

"But I'll feel so funny."

"You'll get used to it."

"Maybe," I mused. "A mighty long time since I have seen clothes that *are* clothes."

In such prosaic fashion did I make ready for the event to which all my days had been frantically keyed. Blessed be the commonplace and its saving power; I was busy with trifles and only pleasantly excited.

"Mrs. Prey, something else is worrying me."

"Yes."

"*Do* you think I'll know a salad fork when I see one and a butter spreader and an after dinner coffee cup?"

Mrs. Prey smiled. "I think you will."

"Imagine having to consider such things," I thought to myself, pushing the needle through the unoffending hole in my button with a vicious jab.

When I went downstairs Sadie rushed to meet me. "You're going home?"

"Just for the day."

"A 'trial' visit?"

"Yes."

Every one had to go through the ordeal of a series of "trial visits"; sometimes these continued for months before the individual was finally released. I knew that everything depended on that day. I went off by myself and waited; I must be very quiet. At last Mrs. Prey called me. There she was, my joyous visitor, and Old Boots too. I nearly smothered him. Before we left I called one of the patients who had been particularly kind and introduced her, and as I went down the walk, in spite of my personal pleasure, I was conscious of the hungry eyes that followed me.

I am convinced that I shall never again be able to put forth the effort that went into that day. I did not make a move, say a word, *breathe* without watching myself to the minutest degree. It meant so much to them, particularly to my brother, who had not seen me for so long. I was determined that there should not be the slightest hesitation, the least unusualness. It was very difficult in spite of the gracious unconcern of those about me. There was a new Jane to meet, no longer a baby but a mature small person ten years old, with a slim long little face that had been quite round when I saw it last. The red curls were

cropped and the eyes now exacting in their intelligent gaze. Tip was much like himself, only longer and busier. He did not let anything, least of all a newcomer, interfere with his absorbing occupations. He was making a score, recording a melody he had learned from a victrola record. He did look up once with a pleased smile when I expressed unconcealed amazement at being able to recognize the tune as he played it. But most of the time he remained in his own boy world.

The thing that troubled me most was the family laughter. I had laughed with Sadie, but this group laughed all the time ; there was a constant interchange of " sparks." How could I ever get in gear ? I did not know.

That evening Old Boots was so delirious with joy that he almost got on a train taking him to our old home, instead of to his own residing place. " Thought maybe I was so far gone I'd have to go out with you and have a family party," he grinned when he confessed to me. The next morning the Doctor came over to Cottage B a little early. " I received a message that your family had a heavenly day yesterday."

" It was all right."

" What ? " she said, looking at me curiously as if expecting some show of enthusiasm.

" It was all right," I repeated. " If anyone thinks they're going to get any excitement

out of me, it's a mistake," I said to myself, while my heart beat in forty different places all over my body. " ' Cool's the word.' "

About the middle of that week Mrs. Prey called me again. " You are to go down town and get a coat to-day. You will be met at the corner of North and West Streets at three o'clock."

" Am I to go alone ? "

" Yes."

" And come right back ? "

" No, the Doctor says you can stay for dinner this evening."

I got off at the appointed corner. When I had gone through " town " before I had been too busy talking and listening, to look ; now I stood and gazed. Never did circus procession, gilded caravan, the entry of a queen into a medieval city look so gay to eager beholder, as did the streets of that staid city, on that spring afternoon. It was a riot of colour : linens, silks, flowered hats, parasols, poured past me in what seemed a molten stream. I became a little conscious of myself. " Queer that East Street could ever be like this ; yes, I am just a rat come out of a hole blinking stupidly at the sun ! " The more I looked the more dazzling the scene became ; it began to amuse me. When my guide appeared I touched her arm.

" You may have to go so far as to lead me,"

I said with a laugh. "This confusion, rush, and clamour make me fairly dizzy." She looked at the street, at me, and we both went into a gale.

Buying a coat would seem a thing too slight for mention. But it was very difficult. As I stood waiting for the clerk, I was arrested by the odours about me: powder, perfume, subtle whiffs of silk and flowers. I had never been conscious of this before in all my life, but the hospital "soap" made me acutely so. The clerk arrived. I was somewhat taken aback by her effusive assurance. I had to see myself in a long mirror with a background of people moving behind me. I choked a little. "You look as if what happened to you, had," I whispered to myself. I had had no normal basis of comparison for so long a time! In that moment I realized why I had not been "let loose" before.

First of all, I noticed that I looked sick, just "ordinary" sick, thin, white, and drawn. I could see that I moved in a hesitant manner, quite "out of character." I began to understand that "getting away" was a cruelly small part of the undertaking I had in hand. I was so weary that night that I was not sorry to get back to the hospital, back where I did not have to watch myself, or be watched. I sank on my bed with a sigh; *now* I could make a slip without its counting against me.

I spent another week-end with my ever gracious hostess. As we came back she said :

" I don't really see much sense in your returning, but perhaps we'd better wait."

" Yes, perhaps. But I'm glad you feel that way ; needless to say, I do."

" The Doctor thinks it is a miracle."

" What did she expect ? "

" Well, she knew you could come to me, but she didn't feel sure you'd ever get any of your old power back, that you'd ever be able to take the place you had in the world. She knows you can now, if you will just be careful."

" I will, that's only sense."

The next morning I was in the library working away, with conscientious punches, on the typewriter which I had lugged back the evening before. The Doctor stood beside me. " I hear," I said, " I hear that there's an epidemic in one of the back wards. Of course I don't know your plans for me, but if you intend to let me go at all soon, I'd a little rather not be detained by smallpox."

She smiled. " I'll vaccinate you right away and you may go."

" And I carried the old typewriter all for nothing ! " I grumbled cheerfully.

" Does it hurt ? " she asked as she pressed on the needle.

" Wouldn't notice it if you took off my head *this* morning," I remarked, with perfect truth.

Mrs. Prey helped me pack. The Doctor came over to say a final good-bye. I was meticulously adjusting a light veil; I felt better in a veil. Some of my hospital friends crowded around to wish me "luck"; others hung back, overcome by their sadness. I slipped out as unobtrusively as I could. "I shall see you soon again," I said to those who cared to hear. "We shall be calling for my things and then under any circumstances I'd come to *see you*."

Sadie walked with me to the gate. "I am going next week," she whispered. I squeezed her hand. "I am so glad." Poor little Sadie, with the mind and nature of a very young child and the burdens of the world heavy upon her shoulders. "But anyway she does not know it," I consoled myself. "She doesn't realize in the least." Her happy smile followed me, making the forbidding towers of my house of distortion fade gently into the distance, merge softly with the surrounding trees, and the hazy sky above.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TIGHT ROPE

1

"NO, it isn't Tip coming from school—it's I; I'm home!"

The days that followed were days of simple, ordinary living, days of complete let down. There was no element of the dramatic, never a high peak. But I was not bored. Only too gladly I left the jagged and unnatural, and followed the quiet ways of the commonplace. I was busy enough! There were an endless number of small things to be done all at once. First, dentistry—four ulcerated teeth had been blowing off the top of my head for the last few weeks. Had it not been for the assistant in the drug-room who sneaked me camphor and aconite, I should have been unable to hold out until my release. Next came clothes, a complete wardrobe to be planned. Much time had to be spent in general rehabilitation. It took all the skill of a hairdresser and much of my own time to reduce my bushy shock to any kind of submission and a new way had to be found "to do it"; I had grown much older

in those years. There seemed no end, but it was all pure delight. I constantly interrupted myself with excursions to the refrigerator. It was impossible to stay fed. I ate constantly and at the end of three weeks had gained fifteen pounds and approximated my normal weight. I came up from my dark hole like a Jack-in-the-Box, getting better oriented with the passing of each day. Of all the things that gave me pleasure there was none more potent than doors. I could lock and unlock them myself. No one ever asked me where I was going. I fairly hugged doors !

My first dinner party was an event, not too simple. Fortunately the group was made up of people who knew each other intimately ; little was required of me. And that was well. No, I hadn't read the latest Galsworthy novel. No, I hadn't seen the last Broadway " hit." No, I had not visited the Nicholas Roerich " show " at the Museum. No, I hadn't heard the Philharmonic on its last trip West. As to fashions I had no ideas, only a very queer feeling in my brief, scanty skirts—quite new. I sat still and intense, committing all topics up for discussion so that I would have ammunition to use upon the next person with whom I had to talk. For some time I fired only interrogations, and though my remarks were of a rather inquisitorial type, they served to keep my head above water until I had a chance

to live a little myself, until conversation could again become an unpremeditated activity.

I became able, gradually, to size myself up a little in relation to my surroundings. One of the most disconcerting factors was my lack of bodily strength. I had not been conscious of this in the hospital because I was putting forth no effort, physically. I could lie down all day if I chose; no one noticed, least of all, I, myself. Now I began to want to do things. I started a task with ease and finished it with aches. Going upstairs, became, sometimes, an almost intolerable effort by the end of the day. I finally asked the good old family doctor—when he came to administer to Tip for green cherries—if he thought I had "rheumatism or something." He laughed: "No, child, no. Just soft." He felt my arms: "Soft as a sponge; keep going, but not too vigorously." I kept going but it seemed to me as though I were getting softer, soft unto dissolution, instead of harder. My most difficult problem was meeting people socially. I was not embarrassed or constrained in any way, just easily tired by them. Even my own family were at times too much. I very often took a book and made my escape to a small green park a half mile or so from the house. Here I sat under a friendly tree and drew my breath quietly. Solitude, long deep draughts of it, was a complete necessity for months. I was like

a radio station receiving any number of new and startling messages. My only chance of release was to be alone. On the other hand, I found my contact with those immediately around me pleasurable in the extreme whenever I was "up to it."

"You know," said my hostess, "I am immensely relieved about something."

"What?"

"Your capacity for enjoyment seems absolutely unimpaired by all that mix up."

"Yes," I said thoughtfully, "yes, I hope it is; but, Heavens, think what there is to enjoy. Did anyone *ever* acquire so much, suddenly?"

And yet . . . I began to have a premonition that, mixed with the pleasure, there was to be a very delicate balancing feat ahead of me. I must *not* slip. I knew that I should have to watch myself at every turn. I was unused to life. I had new connections to make, old ones to re-establish. It would take tact, adaptability, facile-mindedness. Were these things at my command? I did not know. Yet no matter how battered my tools, of one thing I was sure, *the trick had to be turned.* I was out calling on the Doctor one day. She looked at me with a long steady gaze. "It is like a resurrection," she said. "Then Lazarus has my deepest sympathy," I answered quickly. "His was a man sized job."

Not only were my surroundings largely new —because of many changes—but I was new to myself. My reactions were entirely different. Things that I would never have noticed before cut into me like a knife: sounds, smells, mechanical adjustments, telephones, street cars with various and sundry different kinds of entering contrivances, the latest can-opener, the most modern toothpaste top. On the other hand, matters that would once have harrowed me had no effect; little annoyances went past me like a spring breeze. Life had been one long annoyance! I was worried for fear my standards had been lowered and made myself take most meticulous pains about personal matters to which I had never previously given a conscious thought.

"You know," I remarked one morning, "that hospital certainly did do funny things to me."

"What are you thinking of now?"

"Well, I was about to give up on the fit of this lace collar for the simple reason that at worst it was more becoming than a straight jacket; straight jackets as a standard for aesthetics in dress are a bit demoralizing." Little wonder that I pulled myself up short with every move.

"Do you think about those things, much?"

"No, but they occur to me occasionally. I sleep crosswise on my bed because I find I

don't wake up stiff so often thinking I am unable to change my position. It's great to have a big bed again and wiggle about all I want."

One of the first things I did was to straighten out my attitude towards other people's opinion of the hospital experience. Of course anyone who cared to think about it would know. One does not drop out of sight completely—no letters, no anything—and suddenly return save for about one reason. I knew it would make no difference to my most intimate friends and that most people were too busy with their own affairs to think much about mine. Still I was perfectly conscious that the attitude towards insanity was still one of recoil on the part of a large portion of society; it is a disgrace, a thing to speak of in whispers. An old aunt of mine, who would have done anything in the world for me, who greeted me with the greatest kindness, could not quite conceal the fact that she considered me a blot on the family escutcheon. Well, I would stand and take it. It had happened to me; there was no use cavilling with the experience. What I had in hand for the future, my adjustment, was my own job. It concerned no one but me very much. People would have to take me as they found me, just as I had to take myself. With little or no effort I maintained this attitude, largely, I am sure, because of the infinite tact

and good sense of those about me. We mentioned the experience as if it had been nothing more than a prolonged attack of mumps; we laughed about it where we could, and ignored it where we could not laugh. In this way I was saved what might have been acute sensitiveness and suffering. I did not have to try; it simply seemed the only possible attitude to adopt. I think I carried my personal independence a little too far. A friend remarked to me once: "I never saw anything like you; you don't care a hang what people think about you, not a hang!" I made it my business not to, and in getting my balance very likely overshot the mark for a time.

I was spared what might have been even greater suffering on another score. I realized perfectly that there was a fair chance that the difficulty would return. But this did not worry me for a moment. I intended to use all the means I had at my disposal to avoid the calamity, but if it came, it came. That was not for me to think about; it was not my province in the least; mine was to "keep an even keel while sailing" and to sail, just as hard and fast as strength and the wisdom of those who were watching would permit. But *how* was all this to be accomplished? "Learning to 'tack' again will be the dickens," I thought ruefully.

2

Almost as soon as I left the hospital I began to cast about for a "job" and was on the eve of accepting one when a letter came offering me a position in the Music School I had taught in. My joy and complete astonishment were such that the workings of my breathing apparatus were almost permanently disarranged. It would be hard to go back; I knew only too well the dominating power of association; but the chance had come to prove myself at the "old stamping ground." I would go with the Doctor's consent. This was easily obtained and I began preparations for the move. In just a month after my release I was at work again. My job was in itself new, though with the old setting. I began teaching a class or so in musical theory. My hours were short, half time, and continued to be for a number of months, though I protested. "You must rest," was the dictum. I could not help seeing this was so, in spite of my interest and my overwhelming desire to get into the swing. I was quite worn out at the end of each day's work. Usually I went home, lay on my bed in a softly-lighted room with the door shut and wept. I was perfectly happy and calm. Nothing worried me. I even had the good sense not to be humiliated by tears as I had always been before; I knew they

meant nothing but fatigue and weariness, and I remembered the wise remark of William James to the effect that: "The Lord may forgive us our sins, but the nervous system never does." No matter how I might pull my general attitude into shape, I had to "pay up," and I realized it. I lay and wept and wept, quietly and thoroughly, often as not with a smile on my face. "It seems such a silly way out," I whispered, but usually I felt rested enough for dinner. After dinner I lay on a couch or hammock and often slept until time for bed. The next morning I was ready for work and had a reasonable amount of energy. But more and more keenly I felt that the regaining of equilibrium was to be a matter of months, not weeks, possibly of years. I realized also that to recapture it was my supreme task; it was to come before my classes, before even my family, before everything. There was no objective large or small that must not be sacrificed to it, if the need came, for without that equilibrium I was useless, a reed blown by every wind.

I found that I had no habits of work, that concentration was possible for long periods only through a supreme effort of the will, leaving me weak and exhausted. I pulled and pulled, but the weight of those years, the effect of dissolution, pulled likewise. It seemed sometimes that I should be torn asunder, that

I should just have to lie down in the road, and never move again. It seemed also that I could not endure the sharpness of impressions. "If I could only die for a week," I used to cry to myself, "if I could only die as dead as a stone or a clod, and get thoroughly rested and numbed to these millions of things calling to me, pushing me . . . if I could only die for a week, then I knew I could go on."

The only possible solution was, again, solitude. On Sunday mornings, I used to walk several miles to the "pond"; sit or lie on its green banks and "come as near dying" as I could, relax, rest, let go, till I was as limp and unresisting as the water curling in lazy eddies at my feet. Sometimes even this was agonizingly acute. Edna St. Vincent Millay holds that pain of beauty in a wonderful sheath of words:

ASSAULT [1]

I

I had forgotten how the frogs must sound
After a year of silence, else I think
I should not so have ventured forth alone
At dusk upon this unfrequented road.

II

I am waylaid by Beauty. Who will walk
Between me and the crying frogs?

[1] From *Second April*, Harper & Bros. Copyright, 1921, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Oh, savage Beauty, suffer me to pass,
That am a timid woman, on her way,
From one house to another!

And this :[1]

. . . Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

3

One evening Old Boots and I were sitting in the swing. "You know," I said, "I don't think Tip has changed much in these three years that I've been away, but Jane has a lot." There was a catch in his voice as he asked :

"Don't you know it's been four years ?"

"Four," I gasped ; "I only know three."

"Then you've lost one," he said gently. "It's just as well, I guess."

There was no doubt about it. I had *lost* one. I could see when he told me, when he figured it out, that there had been a year somewhere, but for me it was gone, blotted out.

"Well, if I have, I have," I answered, not a little stunned. "And I guess there is no use trying to remember, no use getting after it."

[1] From "God's World" in *Renascence*, Harper & Bros. Copyright, 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

"Not a bit in the world," he said as he gave the swing a push and tipped me slowly out of it by way of needed diversion. I thought no more about the matter. But in a few days I announced at breakfast :

"Have my year back ! "

"How ? "

"I don't know how, any more than you do. I just woke up and there it was ; it came rushing over me so fast it nearly drowned me. I am sputtering still. You are right, I did not miss much by forgetting."

It was the "straight jacket year" that came to the level of consciousness in a fragmentary but positive manner.

"The funny thing is I couldn't get it by trying. I did, in the swing with you ; nothing was any good. Christmas, people, places. I had not a single hook to hang a recollection on, yet here it is. Four years is quite a fence to take all in one jump." There was no use regretting and then I had no time. The days were growing increasingly full and a bit more difficult. It was a steeply-inclined plane all the way. There was no place to stop, not a bush to cling to : "Climbing an ice hill, hanging by a hair" was one way I phrased to myself the "feel" of mental convalescence.

I began to show the strain, as the first joy of freedom more and more subsided into the need of solving the problems freedom presented. A

very good friend said one day: "There is a man in the University who helped me when I was terribly down. Maybe he might make things easier for you. He's a psychological expert from the Briggs School of International Relations in Philadelphia and is here on leave for a year."

"Oh, I am all right," I answered. "I'll get there." Then I began to wonder: "Was I?" How did I know danger signals, when to stop because of fatigue, when to go on for fear of developing an attitude of hypochondria, which I loathed. How did I know anything? I decided I simply did not know. I called the doctor and made an appointment. "It will not be easy to go all over this mess," I thought wearily. "I'd most rather be hanged, but I *am* tired and things are beginning to drag; there's no use not seeing it. I'll tell him first of all that it's hard to concentrate. That will make a beginning. That's 'respectable' at any rate."

It was a dull November day when I entered the office. The doctor was busy with his notes. As I stood at the door he looked up.

"Hello," he said simply, "sit down."

It took all the poise I could summon, and a little more, to go through the formalities of greeting; I wanted to tell him so very much that it was quite as it should be, that his task was done, in a sense, before he had begun. I knew from that first second that I had made

harbour. I dropped all responsibility at his feet as I said haltingly: "Yes, it's dark, but I love these late fall days." In my heart, I was singing a hymn of relief and thankfulness. I need not go another step alone. I perceived at once the penetrating quality of his understanding, the bracing draught of his sympathy. He said afterwards he felt as if he were the Woodsman in the fairy tale who finds the lost Tinker's daughter in a darkly enchanted forest. I hope that good Woodsman knows, as I do, that the Tinker's daughter would still be wandering there, had it not been for his leadership. I could not have gone much longer without help. I am sure the necessity of intelligent after-care cannot be sufficiently stressed. The convalescent is not able to make his own personal adjustment and handle his own case. The responsibility is too utterly crushing. Even with all his help there were times when I felt my feet slip on the rope, the distance below me looked unbelievably great. I knew too well the swiftness of the fall, the sickening thud, the feel of sawdust in my throat, down where clowns and tigers tramp. I learned to shut my eyes and wait. A great New York specialist stood at one end of the rope, the Woodsman at the other, my hospital Doctor held the net, guarding me, until at last I reached the end of that taut bridge, and felt the ground beneath me, brown and firm.

4

Like an inquisitive small boy I ask sometimes, "What for, *what for*, all those years of mad plunging?" I don't know what for, or why it came, or where it went, that wild driving force that hurled me "out of my world." I ask, too, sometimes, "*Was* it all in vain?" I am willing to say it was, and yet perhaps one can gain a little by going down into the pit as well as by climbing a mountain. I think life is somehow grounded, rooted deeper than it could otherwise have been. "Have I learned anything?" Yes, I think I have, about people. There in that place of distortion all the failings, the foibles, the prides, the vices, the longings, the disgusts, were marked out with a sharpness of delineation which only Hogarth knew. That man in Ward 6 was Avarice; he grovelled in his cell; he could not see the sun. This woman was Desire; she held out her hand and called to *nothing* in tones of soft beguilement. From a view of mankind deeply chiselled, marked by unnatural heights, much may be learned of the ordinary drives and impulses of normal human beings who move in a softer light, march to a lower key.

"Have I gained anything in personal development?" Something, there, too, I think. Perhaps no more than experience and the

passing of years would have given anyway I might have learned normally that since "things" are not given to one, I had to demand less of life than I used to. But when I entered the hospital, it was with the waywardness of youth—a bad case. Though the Heavens fell I had to go *my* way. Nothing anyone could say made much impression. I was childishly contrary. The violinist was quite right when he said: "Jane, if I want you to go West, the one thing to do is to suggest that you go East." I was suffering from the Great Fallacy that the world *owed* me a number of things: pleasures, success, friends, lovely surroundings. The Universe was out of gear; *it* was wrong if these things did not come to me. When I emerged from the hospital I was pathetically glad to listen. My way had not been a wise one, that was obvious. The stupidest person I knew had somehow kept to the road, a thing I failed utterly in doing. The world no longer owed me anything. Sunlight and freedom were gifts, whatever came to me, a boon. I was willing to work not only for necessities but for pleasures. I sensed the smallness of my measure against that of the world at large more quickly and more accurately in those four years than I could have under normal conditions. Of that I am reasonably sure.

Then, too, during those years I had a chance

to look. He who has never seen wet white blossoms clinging to black branches, backed by a purple storm-filled sky, who has never seen these through *bars*, has missed their most sharply accented moment of beauty. "What price—sanity?" The struggle to keep it was too great; one could not go another step. What was there to gain? . . . then, those blossoms, wet and white . . . it was quite enough. To keep them, no price too high. If all that mad careening does anything to the individual, it may be just this . . . it gives him an *almost* intelligent appreciation of a dandelion.

The tight rope? . . . It lies innocently coiled, a ball of darning cotton at my feet. Life is commonplace, the door is unlocked, the wind plays freely with a curtain.

And to-morrow? I do not know. Only I have so far emerged that I can let to-morrow *be* to-morrow. It is not for me to face—not yet.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RING

WHEN the story is ended, its point neatly made, the youngest child of any household is sure to ask : " And what happened then ? " It is difficult to adapt oneself to the explanation involved, to endure the sinking feeling that comes with anti-climax. This story is ended and the typewriter closed.

. . . . . .

1

" But," some one asks, " what now ? What happened after all ? What did your ' to morrow ' prove to be ? " The old habit of explanations for importunate children still remaining, one makes answer, though a little wearily : Not much of anything happened " after all." I have just gone on living an ordinary, uneventful life. But I have made *the ring* ! I have leaped from my high estate on the tight rope, where I balanced precariously over the depths of re-dissolution, and am following the drum-beat call to daily labour

As yet I have avoided being led around on a chain or put on exhibition as "the most dangerous beast in the whole show, the mad elephant"—a sign observed recently on the motor truck of a travelling circus.

To tell how my landing in the ring was accomplished would necessitate a long narration. The chief factors may be traced briefly. First, perhaps, is the healing element which resulted from viewing the whole affair objectively and impersonally. While still in the hospital, I was somehow able to stand away from myself enough to be keenly interested in questions of diagnosis and prognosis. I asked more questions than anyone would answer in regard to the characteristics of my aberration, its probable course and possible conclusion.

On leaving the hospital and getting in touch with the Woodsman, I continued my interrogations persistently. "What is it? . . . What is likely to happen now? . . . What is the history of similar cases?" The Woodsman, being a psychologist, not a psychiatrist, would only hazard a guess as to the nature of my difficulty. "Then I haven't even the distinction of an uncommon ailment?" I asked with some amusement. "Not if my hunch is right," he smiled. I read a lot about the label attached to me, and arrived nowhere. Yet all the time I was looking at myself as another person might have looked, and I was

trying to work out a plan of living, not immediately pleasurable to me, but rational for this person who had so recently emerged. The minute I was able, thus, to get on the outside of the experience and yet look back, face it squarely,—that minute I stepped into the ring with the rest of my kind.

This could never have been accomplished for me without the Woodsman. He moved to Minnesota for two years of advisory service in the University. I went to Philadelphia for summer vacations. I managed to see him on an average of three times a month for three years. He worked very largely on what he called the principle of the Purple Omnibus. "If," he said, "if a horse has been frightened say by a purple omnibus, having been used to green ones all his life, there is just one thing to do . . . lead him past purple omnibuses again and again until he is at last used to them. You are like that horse." I was.

He spent most of those three years hunting for purple omnibuses and putting me through my paces. Balk, rear, pull at the bridle as I might—it was no use, past those omnibuses I went! He began with old childish memories which I was trying to push aside and made me recall them. I went over them back and forth, back and forth—as a young child plays scales on the piano—until they became the ordinary stuff of which my conscious thinking was made

and there was no longer any reason why I wanted to forget them. Then, when they had become quite harmless through repetition, I let go of them, quietly and simply, and more or less completely.

As an example of this procedure, he took the infantile urge to atone for a childish sense of failure, and shook it in the sun. I had been tense as a fiddle string about it for years—all my life—had pushed, struggled, wept over it. Spread before me in the clear light of an adult consciousness, which he somehow managed to lend me, that old drive looked like a ridiculous doll's dress, thin and filled with moth holes. "That's not mine," was my inner response. "What have I been dragging that thing around for?"

Finally he attacked the hospital experience. I fought a good fight to avoid this, but it was no use. I was pulled up to the Purple Omnibus with my four feet stubbornly glued to the ground and my knees stiff. He made me talk until I was limp with exhaustion, my voice cracked with strain. Again and again I swayed on my feet as I rose to go and had to clutch the door jamb for support. We finally arranged that he was to "stop" ten minutes before I had to leave, in order that I should have a little time to "snap out" of the mental situation in which he had placed me. As I sat in the low chair by his desk, grey with fatigue,

he looked down at me, his kind dark eyes filled with a real sympathy. He hated, I think, to hurt me so much and yet he smiled with a kind of impishness. He could see that I would know, one day, the futility of my resistance and realize how like a balking animal I was. He sometimes went downstairs with me into the early twilight because, he said, " I don't quite know whether mentally you are—just now—in the hospital or back here with us." Often he kept me at the door for a little while, joking and talking of inconsequential things. I left him with the high hall light shining on the crisp white hair behind his ears, illuminating dimly his broad, square shoulders and the firmness of his poise as he stood there to watch me go. His velvety-rich, strong voice echoed in my ears reassuringly, as I pushed my way against a sharp night wind.

" I will never go through this again—never, never." I swore it by all the gods a thousand times. Yet I knew I should, not because I really saw the use of it, not because of my own desperation, simply because of the quiet power, keen humour, and common sense of him who held my halter. His inner qualities compelled me irresistibly—against all conscious volition and continued to make me face whole phalanxes of Purple Omnibuses. There seemed no finish. Fifty times we glimpsed the last . . . a keenly

put question, a look at me when I was off guard, a quick ear ready to catch my softest indrawn breath at a critical moment and there would be *more* of them—a whole city full!

The Woodsman's devotion and persistence were marvellous. He worked at the cost of incalculable fatigue and loss of time. More than one of his books would have been ready for the press now had it not been for my old ghosts and his self-impelled duty to lay them. He pressed on to an end where no end seemed to be. As the months went by, however, I became less and less tense. He could bring up new difficulties and be met with no resistance. He could take me back over old ones, and we both came out smiling. For three years I talked, unburdened every fear, every horror, every despair, that I had been conscious of and many that I did not know, save as they *affected me emotionally*. A certain concrete terror of early childhood was "excavated." In itself it proved to be unfamiliar, but the emotion of which it was the hidden centre was as old as I, as new as yesterday.

At last it was done. I and all things connected with me had been so discussed and "hashed over" that there was now nothing secret, nothing to inspire curiosity or dramatics. It was all commonplace and human. I became to myself not so much an individual as a mere unit in a species—and not a very exciting one

either. Emotional reactions had become very largely subjected to reason. What the Woodsman finally succeeded in doing—in a word—was to make me feel with my mind, not to think with my feelings.

The relief was indescribable. If ever one human being went down into the farthest places of desolation and brought back another soul, lost and struggling, that human being was the Woodsman—and the fringe of crisp white hair behind his ears is his halo, here and *now*!

The second factor in the general rehabilitation was work. I continued teaching music, but somehow managed to get into that department of the school which received "the free students," most of them children. They provided an ample objectifying force. When I was at work with Nick, I was completely away from "me." I had to be, or Nick would have led us both to destruction. A slim, active red-topped child of fifteen, he stole coal from the railroad, hopped freight cars, swore like Captain Kidd's parrot, and played with all the passion of his sins. He was fairly accurate about his music, though a little rueful as to the necessity of exercises. He stayed away from school whenever he could and practised, to the glory of his music, if not of his arithmetic. The fascinating thing was the bigness of his playing. It was hard to believe it was Nick sitting there at the piano, his head well

up, not watching the keys. The music surged and beat and poured from his grimy paws in a great waterfall of rich pure sound. (I could never have taught him to play with such depth and verve.)

"Nick, what are you thinking about when you play?" I asked one afternoon.

"I'm hearing it all."

"Hearing what all?"

"I'm hearing the whole orchestra." He sometimes managed to take "top seats" at symphonies. "That"—and he plunged into the bass—"that's all de big drums and this"—he awoke the treble's crystal—"this is duh woodwins and duh piccolos. Hell, I wish I could play 'em all—all!" To anchor Nick by his music and keep him from complete disintegration at "De Railroad Bum's Bugaloo" was a problem which left no time for mine—except on the edges.

Then there was Abe, little, weazened, flat-chested, quiet as a mouse, the colour of green cheese from the steam and stench of his father's "Dry Cleaning Parlour for Gents." He worked with unremitting care, sensitive to the most delicate gradations of sound. His music would never be big—but a child of ten who somehow penetrated the spirit of the tragic Pole and played Chopin preludes until one's own spirit hovered too uncomfortably near the surfaces of life, that child must be watched.

He must be given milk at school, fresh air after school; his intensity must somehow be mitigated by baseball—which he loathed, and hikes which he took as if he were being lashed. He *must* be watched. That hot, glazed look in those great pits of darkness which were his eyes, was a signal not to be disregarded.

And what was one to do with Johnny Hanson? A drab little Slav, with a drab mind and drab eyes; he can't play now, he never could play, he will never be able to play. But he worked and worked and worked. He had been discouraged; he had been told not to come back. He was always there. The school gave up. Johnny received his lessons with clock-like regularity, because of his unending persistence. He must not be given the idea that he could ever do anything with his music; yet somehow inside his sand-coloured soul was a spark which nothing could put out, and which he was utterly unable to express. How to make a "listener" of a determined and untalented "creator" was another problem that kept one thinking far into the night.

Every Tuesday and Friday little Greta came, and with her a bit of a dried-apple grandmother. Greta had two short braids which stuck straight out with excitement as she played. She had no great ability, but possessed an unerring accuracy for a child, a remarkable

ability to read, and an unfailing and jolly sense of rhythm which has already taken her some distance as an accompanist. She liked best to play folk-tunes. The grandmother, huddled into an old-world shawl, kept perfect time with her knitting needles and often hummed unintelligible words with a staccato perfection of pulse and beat. "Me—I come with Greta . . . I be es here, only, at home, like old country." Poor, lonely, old mite. With her I, too, felt a sense of having a place in the world.

What was I to these children? Just a tool, something that helped to "git de music out." It was well for me that I had found that to which I might be so closely subordinate.

2

Another very important factor in the upgrade was that of continued social adjustment. This was not so difficult as it might seem. I was normal; so were my friends. I clicked into place. As soon as I came back, Miss Winthrop and I began to "hike" a great deal. We found the first wind-flowers and had New Year's dinner by a camp fire on an old stump around which we had to keep moving in order not to freeze stiff. The woods, the long roads, the day's work, clear-sighted understanding together with complete frankness and confidence, made up the chief elements of a

friendship so solidly built as to have become a "life sentence."

My continued relations with the Hospital Doctor were unendingly helpful. She was always ready to give me her advice and care. I saw—when I afterwards visited her—as I had never seen before, how terribly difficult her task had been. It was a work of self-sacrifice, courage, patience, and an infinitely adequate sense of humour. With wards overcrowded and undermanned, she struggled on, finding time for the individual in all that hopeless, sodden mass. Hers is the quiet kind of service that the world hears little about, but which furthers that world's best ends more securely than the heroism of display. If I have to face my ordeal again, I should hope to do it with her, under conditions more favourable to us both. She stands as the staunchest, the most faithful of my "old friends."

New friends came and professional acquaintances grew up around Nick, Abe, Johnny, and Greta. With the pressure of work and fatigue it was a little hard to meet them always open-heartedly, but here lies a large measure of the answer as to recovery. He who has but newly left a solitary, unnatural environment, must get in step. Any partner should be welcome for a short trick, at least, just so one has the sense of *belonging* again. It is easier to look

back at past confusions coolly if one is sure of present companionship and the ordinary trappings of normalcy. Nothing so establishes the sense of sanity as trivial, seemingly unimportant touches with all sorts of people. Fenced in safely by a living hedge, one is kept from old mists and fogs.

3

By a fortunate play of chance, I met a new doctor, a man who has devoted a lifetime to the observation of the sick soul and study of the mind out of gear, and who was "solacing his maturity with books and writing about them." "One of the most important elements in recovery is play," he told me. At the beginning of the mid-winter term a friend of mine flew into the music room where I had been struggling with a "pay" pupil who was forced by deaf and determined parents to take lessons. "Miss Winthrop's going to give a course in wood carving, come on!" I went and found, to my amazement, that I had a knack. We really "made things," bowls and spoons at first, then simple bits of furniture. I kept close to peasant designs and used colour —lots of it, bright and clear, with few shades. I studied folk patterns day and night and grew more and more interested. My own quarters began to overflow; there was no place to stand

and I had to instigate a moving day before I went to bed. As a result I started to "do" rooms for the youngsters in the college—for fun. These rooms were usually converted by their owners into "studios." Comfortable beds were taken out and hard couches put in, practical chairs exchanged for painted stools, an easel put athwart the closet door, and a "tied and dyed" smock hung on the door knob. The youngsters like it; they looked cunning enough against their gay background and managed somehow to sleep and at times to assume at least the semblance of studying.

As for me, I was wholly entertained. There was a hint of the creative element to take me away from myself. I applied energy outwardly instead of inwardly. I felt myself pushing against good solid objective stuff, and had the fun of seeing something happen as a result. Then, too, I was thereby saved from many things—not the least of them golf. I was saved from spending all my salary on the latest cut in knickers, the latest colour in vests and sweaters, saved from aiming for the hole in front of me—as a friend of mine did—and hitting the bunkers behind from which she had laboriously dug her way at the price of fifteen strokes. This, while a group of real players, business men, stood in a row and waited until she was a safe distance ahead of them. I spoiled a good deal of wood and

used gallons of expensive paint and remained so poor that I have not been tempted to buy a flivver. I can still walk !

4

These are a few of the outward features in the pull up. There are certain inner adjustments which might be briefly touched upon. Some of these go back to early childhood. When I was not more than three, at the most, my brother, who was considerably older, used to take me into a dark corner of the library where I seemed miles away from the friendly fire in the family living-room. He got down on his knees ; he was a bear ! He growled and roared. My breath came in little quick puffs. He was getting so near ; his teeth were so big ; he had such a long snout and such fierce eyes. I stood it as long as I could, then : " Boots," I would cry out, " Boots, be *you* ! " He would laugh and swing me into his arms, calling me a " game little codger." I felt ripples of delight at his approval run up and down all my small person. He carried me those dark miles back to my mother in the firelight. I knew I had done well, I was not afraid, not really. I never forgot that lesson. I was *always to try not to be afraid.* I put my small foot on the neck of that age-old enemy and kept it there as Old Boots had taught me

to. This determination to be unafraid was invaluable in helping me to go through dark lanes of the mind and stand waiting in dark corners until some one led me back to the light of a clearer thinking.

We had an old cousin who came to visit us sometimes, to the complete despair of the entire household. She radiated an atmosphere of black, bombazine gloom. She went to the top of the family-tree—I always wondered how she could get up so high—and then climbed all the way down—clear to me, the youngest, talking of calamities past, present and future, possible and impossible. All these pleasant woes centred, in the end, about her and sent grateful shivers of misery down her responsive frame. Grief was a drug she must have. If there was none, she created it from her active imagination. The family struggled to be cheerful. At the end of ten days no one could laugh. We were spending all our time finding something for Cousin Hannah to be "delightfully miserable about." At the age of ten I had had enough of this. "What *is* the matter with her?" I asked my father. "She is near-sighted; she never looks farther than her own nose," he answered. "It's not a very pretty one," I remarked disrespectfully; "I should think she would." I began to ponder over Cousin Hannah. "No, sir, I'm going to be so far-sighted I can see the moon, if I fall

over the door sill! No, sir, I'm not going to be like that, not *me*." When I emerged from the "House of Distortion" to find the world new and far away and strange, it was well that I had established the habit of looking out; it was well that I could see the moon.

These are very slight, but concrete examples of the truth of Descartes's world-wide accepted aphorism: "I think, therefore I am." These early trends proved to be dominant forces in making possible the leap back to the ring. One of the most important of them was a sense of humour—my father's gift. The whole experience of madness at some time or other seemed funny. The absurdity of making such a fuss about living, of scratching, biting, struggling over the mere fact of existence which even my kitten takes so wisely, curling itself up in a ball when it is tired and creating an amusing bottle brush of its tail when it is roughly disturbed. My fellow sufferers and inmates were funny—almost as funny as I—Mrs. Antoinette Brackett, who could not sew unless she had an acorn shell for a thimble; Miss Lucinda, who wore a shoehorn in her hair, thinking it a Spanish comb. They were bits out of some queer phantasy of the old gods who laughed and joked with them—Pans who had fauns' ears, fauns who could weep.

It is true one cannot add a cubit to one's stature by taking thought. Who would be

fool enough to try? But one can add to equilibrium by taking thought. It is the only possible way. "Here I am out. I have to stay. Now, how?" From an inner determination to think myself back to balance came certain very practical means: Sleep—no less than twelve hours, at first. Lots of food; I was under weight. Exercise to be taken regularly, when I wanted to stay at home and read. At this point the doctor, the doctor who did not care much about minds, but thought mostly of bodies, took charge. He was a fine gentleman near enough "the old school" to be interested even if one were not really ill. He laid down the law! Somehow a supply of reserve energy had to be amassed. I could eat only things that were easy to assimilate in order to have that much more strength to put into just living. With my tongue in my cheek, with smiles and tears, with resentment and gratitude, I toed the mark. In spite of myself I made the ring. I made it because I was surrounded on three sides by the good doctors and the Woodsman, on the fourth by loyally unnoticing and discerning friends.

All seemed to be progressing at least in the general direction of the goal when there rose up again before me the snivelling spectre of the chronic hypochondriac. Shivering and folding himself into himself, he takes his pulse whenever he is not reading the thermometer. Good

heavens, was I heading for that? I seemed, indeed, between the hammer and the anvil. If I veered to one side the hammer might fall and crush me, a second collapse; if I swerved to the other side, I would be bruised by the anvil, flattened into a boneless form of him who is always ill and never has a pain. Of course, madness is preferable to that, but neither embellished the future. What was the answer? Again it was largely the doctors and the Woodsman. They knew what I might safely do, what I must refrain from. I simply took their word for it and looked out, not in. Yet even with all possible help the course was a difficult one to hold.

5

If one is going insane there are of course certain uncontrollable factors. Nevertheless if I have to do it again, I hope to handle myself differently. I should, at the first ghost of a sign, go straight to Chicago and take the Twentieth Century Limited to New York where I should find him who for "the solace of his maturity has turned to books and writing about them." He would take me to the hospital which he founded to aid him and others in solving such problems as mine.

My family is intelligent and well informed

on most subjects, but when my trouble came they were completely at a loss. It seemed one of those things that cannot happen, but do. Had they had the information that has come to me in the last three years, this document would never have been written, for the records of the author doctor's Institute show that many people have been spared the experience here recorded by *timely*, intelligent care and treatment. The layman needs exactly the education in regard to the prevention and means of dealing with an incipient mania, that such an institution is prepared to give. If there be any excuse for the making of this report it is that these words be written. *They cannot be too forcibly emphasized.*

6

Heredity might be considered as one of the "uncontrollable factors"; parents seem to be; but if I could choose, I would choose to come back just as I came this time. It is because of them that I at last escaped. Yet, on the other hand, there was once a Bohemian fiddler who made a Scotch mystic his wife and my great-grandmother. It was a strange blending and I could dispense with it. He is perhaps the "tare" in my heredity discussed by those who know. If in some astral state

I meet that fiddler he will be wise to keep on the opposite side of the Milky Way. I might be tempted to spoil his next tune.

One factor distinctly not uncontrollable is the point of view toward the world of practical affairs. I am to call "the whole shebang" a game, play for high stakes if I can, lose for low ones if I must, but *play*. I am to consider the earth no longer as a place for tears or battles or rages, but as an opportunity for free action and laughter which even "him whom the Gods would destroy" can keep as an inviolable possession. Does not the lame dog keep his wagging tail and his good bark?

It does not seem that any set of circumstances can be deadly important save to self-important people. One wonders idly, who is important. Go up on the Woolworth tower, if you are not afraid of being classed with Innocents Abroad, look down and see. No one stands out unless it be that little ant who has idiotically held up traffic by a wrong turn. Surely none desires such distinction. "Why so hot, my little man?" Running to and fro as if he owned Wall Street and all its concerns, his one true concern is merely to fit on the moving lines, keep to the procession.

Another element quite within the bounds of control is the attitude one takes to the world in its so-called "unpractical aspect." At about the age I went into the hospital many young

people, having recovered from the religious fervour of adolescence, are experiencing a reaction which may well lead to a pretty general scepticism. Following this comes the time of adult thought and searching, and the establishment of sane adjustment with the Universe. This latter period I missed. It was spent in the maddest of protests. When "I returned to the world" I was completely preoccupied with actuality. I wanted to keep as close to it as possible in order to be that much farther from old "haunts." I felt a trifle suspicious of anything which might lead me away from that which immediately confronted me. During my exile I had displayed a continuous attitude of negativism. In the matter of convictions on any large scale, this continued. I was more concerned with what I did *not* believe than with that which I might have affirmed. Then, too, I just could not face the thought of religious readjustment. I slammed the door tight shut—I don't know quite why.

As a certain calm and surety began to descend upon me that door opened a little—a very little. As a part of recovery I saw the wisdom of attempting this final adjustment. I have not gone far; I can give no labels. But the immensities do preclude a negative and limiting philosophy. If one gives the question any thought at all one is struck by

the manner in which experiences in the world of religion open before the explorer in that field, as new ideas in the world of mechanics open before the inventor. St. Francis certainly could *fly* through the medium of his unlimiting faith. That "new bursts of understanding have come again and again to men of all lands and times" is so generally admitted as to have become hackneyed. Yet, thinking of these pilots of the unknowable, however casually, one must feel harbour-locked indeed who will not make at least a test voyage.

"He who ruleth his spirit . . ." seems a fitting watchword for the venture. This presents fair challenge to any man, but particularly to him who is mentally and emotionally Harlequin, with a nature patched and varicoloured. The effort for self-mastery, which is the essence of mental convalescence, can hardly be effective unless the essayer makes a connection with strengths greater than his own. It may be that he turns to those who have achieved, and made universal forces visible and concrete through that achievement; it may be that he looks beyond personal triumphs to Victory, beyond personal mastery to Power, letting his mind stretch itself to the compass of these words. Whatever the means, a conscious and deliberate attempt to make the most fundamental of all adjustments should, perhaps, be dealt with as the first rather than

the last factor in recovery. For so many it has proved to be the central motif of "the pattern."

7

The answer to the question, "what did your 'to-morrow' prove to be; what happened after all?" is simply: the best I could do was to fit into a very *simple* pattern, plain and without distinction, the pattern of my Ring. Am I going to keep on fitting in? I don't know. Even the "Doctor Who Looks at Literature" does not know, and he knows nearly everything. His is the final word; he it is who "bosses the job" at long range, points out danger signals and provides antidotes to suspicious impulsions. What am I to think of the future if even he does not know? Nothing . . . again, I shall leave it to him, to the Woodsman and to her who first dug the ass out of the pit. The future is still not my task; mine is to go around with the Big Show and do my turn when the gong rings.

If I get past the ten-year mark of safety, which the doctor has set, as an active performer in the ring, rather than as something caged, and if some one would like to know how the final end was accomplished, let him ask. The doctors, the Woodsman, or I will answer. We

shall tell our story calmly, without emotion. We shall look back on the bogies, goblins, demons of the experience, and deem them "... but smoke to be." We shall be so wise—then.

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